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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH
IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT OF QUEBEC

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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The undersigned certify that they have read,
and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT
OF QUEBEC submitted by Sister Catherine Lawrence
Deal in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Business Administration.

ABSTRACT

By analyzing the relationships among the Roman Catholic Church and the English-speaking and French-speaking unions of Canada from 1900 to 1967, this study has examined: a) the role of the clergy in the formation and development of the labour movement; b) the characteristics of the union which emerged; c) the causes of the conflict between the English-speaking and French-speaking unions; d) the influence of the French culture on the organizations; and e) the changing role of the clergy in the labour movement.

The study revealed that the French culture influenced: a) the decision of the clergy to participate in the labour movement; b) the model of unionism which was established--European; c) the changes which developed within the union; and d) several of the causes which deterred affiliation.

The dominance of the Church in Quebec was an inevitable result of the historical situation. Leadership became the prerogative of the clergy after the exodus of the French elite following the English Conquest in 1759. At the turn of the 19th century, the French people were destitute as a result of accelerating capitalism. With these societal conditions being the prime mover, the clergy, as the leaders of the French populace, established the Catholic Labour Union for the purpose of: a) improving the social conditions of the workman; b) educating the workman in the industrial doctrine of the Church; and c) passing the direction of the union to a lay leadership when administrators were available.

The clergy established unions in various parts of the province, and these organizations affiliated to form the Canadian and Catholic Congress of Labour (CCCL) in 1922. The Confederation progressed and in 1949 the first step toward a lay leadership was made. Gradually, as leaders became available, the clergy assumed the role of spiritual advisors.

A continual conflict has existed between the English-speaking and French-speaking unions over affiliation. Both unions have reciprocated accusations as to the cause.

In 1960, at the request of lay leaders, membership was opened to individuals of all faiths. Simultaneously, the name Canadian and Catholic Congress of Labour was changed to the Canadian National Trade Union (CNTU). The philosophy of the CNTU is social reform--not simply salary increases, but complete integration of the worker and the sharing of responsibility at all levels of undertaking.

At present, the clergy hold a dual role in the union: educator--teaching the social doctrine of the Church; and advisor--planning decisions with union officials. Relationships among the clergy, union officials, and members of the rank and file continue on a friendly basis.

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INTRODUCTION

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT OF QUEBEC

This study proposes to examine, a) the role played by the Roman Catholic Church in the development, formation, and establishment of the confessional labour union movement in Quebec, b) the effects of Church endeavours, c) the conflict among the English-speaking and French-speaking unions, and d) the influence of the unique French-Canadian culture on the organizations.

By tracing through the historical evolution of the French labour movement in Quebec from its establishment in 1900 to the present, the study intends to answer the following specific questions:

1. What were the key initiatives and attitudes adopted by the Church in the formation of the labour unions?
2. What are the characteristics of the union which emerged?
3. What were the causes of the conflict which existed among the English-speaking unions and French-speaking unions?
4. What was the influence of the culture on the organizations?
5. What is the role of the clergy in the labour movement at present?

H. A. Logan describes a trade union as an institution which assumes that organized self-help is the best method for improving the lot of wage-workers in a capitalistic society. The focus of contemporary trade union interest is increasingly on obtaining an agreement with the employer governing wages and working conditions.

Earlier trade unions stressed the practice of mutual aid through the use of the insurance principle. Still others, which because of its varied expression is both old and young, see the union as an instrument for bringing about a fundamental change in economic society and substituting for it some form of socialized production and distribution.¹

It is believed by many that the appalling effects of capitalism on society forced the beginning of trade unionism in Canada. A letter written in 1837 and quoted by Charles Lipton reported the following conditions. There were a frightful number of families driven from their homes by hunger, going from door to door beseeching rich and poor alike. Men, weakened with hunger were seeking work, but often in vain, for those who formerly employed the poorest have run short themselves.²

These alarming circumstances forced the workers to organize, to unite and fight for decent wages and conditions. In Canada organization was underway between 1827 and 1836. Some say Canada's first union was the Quebec City printers' organization, founded, it is believed, in 1827.³ The beginning of unionism experienced severe

¹H. A. Logan, Trade Unions in Canada (The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1948), p. 1

²A letter in La Minerve quoted in C. Lipton, The Trade Union Movement of Canada 1827-1859 (Canadian Social Publications Ltd., Montreal, 1966), p. 3

³Lipton, p. 3

struggles. Unions were illegal and many workmen were arrested for attempting to organize. Many unions lasted for only a short time and then expired.

In 1872 Canada's workers first demonstrated their identity as a class. The Typographical Society of Toronto, a union with 28 years of continued existence behind it, decided to strike for the following demands. "A week's work to consist of 54 hours, \$10 per week; 25 cents per hour overtime for job printers."⁴ On March 13, a membership meeting was informed that the master-printers had rejected the 54-hour demand. The meeting decided: "Be it resolved that all union men quit work "⁵ Strike pay was fixed at \$3 per week for single men, and \$5 per week for married men. The strikers were arrested and printers were brought in from the country to take the jobs of the strikers.⁶

It was at this time that the Ontario Workman, a pioneer labour newspaper, began to publish propaganda to promote socialism and the Marxian theory--down with capitalism. The Toronto Labour Advocate, organ of the Toronto Trades and Labour Council, made the following statement in the September 11, 1891 issue:

⁴Toronto Typographical Society, Minutes, Feb. 17, 1872, quoted in C. Lipton, p. 29

⁵Toronto Typographical Society, Minutes, Feb. 24, 1872, quoted in Lipton, p. 29

⁶Toronto Typographical Society, Minutes, March 13, 1872, quoted in Lipton, p. 29

Socialists stand for the overthrow of the competitive system. They seek abolition of private ownership of the means of production, including land, capital and machinery. They seek the organization of an industrial commonwealth in which the government will control the production and the people control the government.⁷

Socialism and the trend to socialism was operating as a significant current in the trade union movement. As the decade neared its end, prospects seemed dark, but distinctive labour organizations were developing.

According to Stuart Jamieson, it was at the turn of the century, in 1900, that the Roman Catholic Church first became involved in the labour union movement in Quebec. Archbishop Bégin was asked to act as arbitrator during a lockout in the boot and shoe industry. The strike was the result of a declaration by the manufacturers which forbade their workmen to belong to professional unions. The Archbishop's recommendations, which called upon the unions to change their rules to comply with justice, honesty, and morality, were accepted. The union consented further to have a chaplain named by religious authority to take part in their counsels and to assist at meetings.⁸ Archbishop Bégin was expressing the thoughts of the Church as presented in the papal encyclical, Rerum Novarum, (The Spirit of Revolutionary Change) published in 1891. The letter written by

⁷Labour Advocate, Sept. 11, 1891, quoted in C. Lipton, p. 88

⁸S. Jamieson, Industrial Relations in Canada, (The Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd., Toronto, 1957), p. 56

Pope Leo XIII, concerned the Church's policy toward the welfare of men, and proclaimed that workers have the right to organize.

At this moment the condition of the working population is the question of the hour; and nothing can be of higher interest to all classes of the State than that it should be rightly and reasonably decided. But it will be easy for Christian workingmen to decide it aright if they form associations, choose wise guides, and follow the same path which with so much advantage to themselves and the commonwealth was trod by their fathers before them.⁹

Logan dates the beginning of an exclusively Catholic syndicalism in Canada as being 1912, when the pulp and paper workers of Chicoutimi, Quebec, formed the Federation of Workers of Chicoutimi, under direction of the clergy.¹⁰ By forming Catholic unions, it was the hope of the Church, to control the spread of socialism which was so prevalent among the labour unions.¹¹ During the following decade, with much struggle and hardship, unions were organized by the clergy in various parts of Quebec.¹² Membership in the Catholic unions as published by the Department of Labour was 31,000 in 1919, 40,000 in 1920, and 45,000 in 1921.¹³ Finally in 1922, these unions affiliated to form the Canadian Catholic Confederation of Labour (CCCL), now known as the Canadian National Trade Union.

⁹J. Husslein, S.J., Ph.D., "Rerum Novarum," in Social Wellsprings (The Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Vol. 1, 1940), p. 202-3

¹⁰Programme--Souvenir du Premier, p. 63, in Logan, p. 567

¹¹Cf. p. 32 below

¹²Logan, p. 566

¹³Thirteenth Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1923, p. 58

The original objectives of the priests in Quebec in organizing the unions were to assist the working class in improving its position, to educate the union members in the Church's industrial philosophy, and to pass the direction of the unions to a lay leadership as soon as they became capable. By the industrial philosophy of the Church one has reference to that body of social doctrines contained in specific encyclical letters of the Roman Pontiffs beginning with Leo XIII in 1891 to Paul VI, 1967.¹⁴

The role of the clergy was to guide the members, to advise them of their duties, to support them in their just claim, and to maintain among them the spirit of justice and forbearance in their relations with the employers.¹⁵

Except for the Catholic unions, the germs of the union idea were undoubtedly borrowed from Britain and carried largely in the minds of English artisans as they entered Canada.¹⁶ Ideas on the organization of the Catholic unions by the French clergy, were probably borrowed from Europe and from the above-mentioned body of ideas. Consequently, the French and Catholic union of Quebec was unique in North America in that it adhered to the European model of unionization rather than the North American model. It would appear, then, that the French unions and the English unions held

¹⁴Husslein

¹⁵Thirteenth Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada
1923, p. 12

¹⁶Logan, p. 4

different ideas from the beginning and this possibly has contributed to the many disputes between the two groups that have occurred over the years. The major source of friction has been the question of affiliation.

The English union movement, amidst difficulties, made progress through the years, and unions were formed across Canada. One of the first and strongest was the Trades and Labour Congress which was a full-fledged center by 1883. Four years later the American Federation of Labour was formed in the United States.¹⁷ At the Trades and Labour Congress held at Berlin (Kitchener) in 1902, the Canadian and American unions affiliated to form an international union. At this time there were Canadian unions that did not wish to affiliate, and these unions were excluded from the international union by an amendment to the constitutions that "no national union be recognized where an international union exists".¹⁸

Thus was engendered a persisting duality, a multiplicity of trade centers in Canada, which has persisted down to the present. This exclusion from the international union affected the French unions in that they organized as a national union and have remained on the national level to the present time.

One of several accounts of the conflict which arose among the English-speaking unions and the Catholic French-speaking unions is

¹⁷Lipton, p. 72

¹⁸Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, Seventeenth Annual Convention, 1902, Proceedings, p 73

given by Logan. The English accuse the French of religious exclusiveness, thereby dividing the forces of labour. The effects of this division, according to the English, were: a) it weakened the bargaining power of labour by introducing an undesirable form of competition in the labour commodity, which is said to be the cause of cheaper labour prices in other Canadian centers, b) it frustrated strikes called by the English international unions, c) it repressed the progressive demands made by the English unions, and d) it caused friction in union relations with the government.

Although these accusations may be true, there exists a certain misrepresentation. It was the original intention of the Church in Quebec to follow the European model of unionism where the different religious denominations form separate unions, but unite their voices for affairs of common concern. The system from the beginning was more inclusive than the way in which the Catholic movement is generally represented.¹⁹ However, the situation was remedied in 1960 when the Catholic union opened its membership to members of all faiths. Nevertheless, disunity still continues. This provokes debate as to whether the conflict was due to the Catholic element or the French element.

In response to the accusations of dividing the forces of labour, the French offered the following rebuttal: a) an obvious lack of organization at the international level among the English-speaking unions, b) communistic radicalism in the ranks of the

¹⁹Logan, p. 598-603

English unions, c) a French-Canadian dislike of domination by American unions (the English unions were affiliated with the American labour movement), d) fear of losing the Catholic education system, and e) sociological and psychological factors such as the loss of the French language, culture, and religion. Over the years, the above factors have worked against affiliation with the English unions.²⁰

Progress continued and 1940 saw the founding of the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL). The CCL was a merger of the All Canadian Congress of Labour and the unions expelled from the TLC. Thus the situation in Canada was comparatively simple, with most union members grouped in three centers, the TLC, CCL, and the CCCL.²¹

The following table demonstrates not only the progress made in the labour movement, but also the status of the Quebec union within the movement

²⁰Logan, p. 594

²¹Lipton, p. 267

UNION MEMBERSHIP BY TYPE OF UNION
AND AFFILIATION, 1965

Type and affiliation	Number of Unions	Number of Locals	Membership Number	Per Cent
International unions.....	110	4,680	1,124,741	70.8
AFL-CIO/CLC.....	89	4,207	982,748	61.9
CLC only.....	3	47	13,291	0.8
AFL-CIO only.....	8	12	17,555	1.1
Unaffiliated railway brotherhoods.....	2	119	8,789	0.6
Other unaffiliated unions....	8	295	102,358	6.4
National unions.....	52	2,593	389,746	24.5
CLC.....	18	1,592	165,984	10.4
CNTU.....	13	640	142,522	9.0
Unaffiliated unions.....	21	361	81,240	5.1
Directly chartered local unions..	216	216	26,655	1.7
CLC.....	162	162	19,124	1.2
CNTU.....	54	54	7,531	0.5
Independent local organizations..	138	138	47,613	3.0
TOTAL	516	7,627	1,588,755	100.0 *

* Labour Organization in Canada, fifty-fourth edition, for the calendar year 1965. As of this writing these are the latest published statistics

As noted in the above table the Canadian National Trade Union (formerly the CCCL) constitutes approximately 10% of union membership in Canada--9% on the national level and .5% of directly chartered local unions.

At the beginning of 1965, the Confederation had in affiliation 13 federations and 54 directly chartered local unions. Combined membership of all affiliates numbered 150,053 in a total of 694 locals. Affiliated secondary bodies included 16 local labour councils.

It was the original intention of the Church to pass along direction of the Catholic unions to lay leaders as soon as they became capable. The Church realized that the leaders were capable of accepting the responsibility during the Asbestos strike in 1949. The asbestos miners were informed by their union leaders that the companies, principal among which was the U.S. corporation Johns-Manville, had rejected their demands for higher wages, and safety and sanitary conditions in the mines. On Monday, February 14, the strike began. Duplessis reacted by sending in 100 provincial police. The company secured an injunction against the union and sued it in the courts for half a million dollars. The strikers refused to yield. The strike lasted through February, March and April, during which time there was much picketing, bloodshed, and suffering.

On May 2, Roman Catholic church leaders took a stand on the strike and the Archbishop of Montreal, Joseph Charbonneau preached a historic sermon in which he said:

The working class is the victim of a conspiracy which seeks its destruction and when there is a conspiracy to crush the working class it is the duty of the Church to intervene...We want social peace but we don't want the crushing of the working class.²² We are attached to man more than to capital. That's why the clergy has decided to intervene. It wants to have justice and charity respected and desires that there shall cease to be a situation where more attention is paid to money interest than to the human element.²³

Archbishop Charbonneau's action excited widespread comment and Duplessis was furious. He initiated measures to have Archbishop Charbonneau dismissed. Not long after the strike, it was announced that the Archbishop had submitted his resignation. He was sent to a retreat in British Columbia and there died some years later.

The asbestos miners emerged victorious from their strike. The Asbestos strike was a major moment in the progressive evolution of the workers of Quebec and their trade union movement.²⁴

All of these events made it clear to the clergy that the lay leaders were capable of directing union affairs. The clergy withdrew from active participation in the labour movement, and since 1949 have continued in the role of spiritual and moral directors. Some claim that there was pressure from the lay leaders to have the withdrawal of the clergy expedited, because the union at this time was under the direction of young and progressive leaders such as Gerard Picard, Jean Marchand, and Marcel Pepin.

²²These ideas can be found in Rerum Novarum, in J. Husslein, p. 165

²³Labour Facts, Oct., 1959, quoted in C. Lipton, p. 324

²⁴Lipton p. 323-25

Under the presidency of Roger Mathieu, the 39th. (1960) annual convention of the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour, changed the organization's name and modified its statement of principles to give it a non-confessional character. The new name, as indicated previously, is the Confederation of National Trade Unions.²⁵ Membership, prior to this time, was exclusive to Roman Catholics but it is now open to members of any faith.

Today the CNTU is a progressive, efficient, and self-seeking union. The definition, as previously quoted from Logan, seems appropriate for the Quebec union: an instrument for bringing about a fundamental change in economic society and substituting for it some form of socialized production and distribution. The minutes of the 42nd General Convention (1966) reveal the union as moving toward a higher goal than simply wage increases; it is seeking a 'Society For Man'. President Pepin at the last convention summarized the union's intentions as being: "To work out progressively our own conceptions of the organization of society...(invent) new social forms, more noble, more complete. The future must necessarily be different from the past, or else it will sow the seeds of violence and hatred."²⁶

There is no question here of attempting to portray the Roman Catholic Church as the great champion who raised the workman from the state of degradation, nor as the instigator of labour organizations, but simply to state her teaching and her concern for the welfare of

²⁵39th Annual Convention of the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour, in the Labour Gazette, 1960 p. 1264

²⁶42nd General Convention of the CNTU, in the Labour Gazette, 1966, p. 712

the working men in an industrial society, and to study the role which the Church played in the Quebec situation.

To clarify terminology, the ambiguous concept of "Catholicism", following Ryan's concept,²⁷ will be replaced by "Catholic Church", which is defined as the structure of the Roman Catholic Church. The Church in this study, is assumed to be those who have authority to teach, interpret doctrine, enforce policy, and organize action toward specific goals in the name of the whole Church--that is, the bishops, the priests, and the authorized Catholic teachers; together with the organizations, institutions, movements, and publications immediately inspired or directed by them. The primary emphasis is, therefore, rather on the elite who legitimately teach and interpret value orientations, and only secondarily on the community of the faithful who accept, ignore, or reject this guidance in an ambiguous degree.

The word "culture" when encountered in conversation, refers particularly to music, art, and literature. But, the word will be used throughout this writing in quite a different sense, that is, the technical meaning that it has in anthropology and sociology which refers to the patterns of belief and behaviour of a given society.

"English-speaking" is used as a short form for the main body of Canadian unions--that is, the CLC affiliates and unaffiliated unions. They are not strictly English-speaking because some of them organize in Quebec and are in the Quebec Federation of Labour, the provincial

²⁷W. F. Ryan, S.J., The Clergy and Economic Growth in Quebec 1896-1914 (Laval University Press, Quebec, 1966), p. 6

organization of the CLC. "French-speaking" is used to designate members of the Canadian National Trade Union of Quebec.

CHAPTER I

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE LIFE OF QUEBEC

The Province of Quebec, with 88% of the population being French and Catholic, has a culture which differs from that of the rest of Canada. The roots of this uniqueness reach back to the early days of colonization. A brief reflection on the historical development of Quebec will lend background to this study, serve to explain the circumstances which led to the involvement of the Roman Catholic clergy in the labour union movement, and also reveal the cultural values which made Quebec favorable to labour unionism.

Mason Wade affirms that the motive for sending an expedition from France to establish a new colony in Canada was twofold. First, to propagate the Catholic faith. Second, to develop the fur trade. Consequently, one of the prime motives of colonization brought Roman Catholic priests as first immigrants to Quebec. This was an age characteristic of religious enthusiasm both in government and people.

From the earliest days of settlement in the 17th century, education and the care of the sick and needy were included in the province of the Church. The missionaries also performed governmental functions as diplomatic agents among the Indians.²⁸ The clergy were influential in promoting the only two sources of income in Quebec at the time--the fur trade, and financial support from the Motherland.

²⁸M. Wade, The French-Canadian Outlook (The Viking Press, New York, 1946), pp. 12-22

Because the early history of French Canada was for many years written exclusively by clerics, whose primary work was teaching religion to the natives and settlers, the religious basis of the French tie with the Indians has been overstressed at the expense of the economic and political factors. Yet, even when this is taken into consideration, the religious influence remains obviously strong.

From the beginning, the French were dependent upon the Indians to supply furs and to act as guides for their explorations. The Indians referred to the clergy as the "black robes" and through the teaching of religion a friendly relationship was established among them. Because of this relationship, the clergy acted as intermediaries, which was an essential function in the establishment of the fur trade.

The fur trade was the economic base of the colony, demanding modest amounts of capital and the ability to make contact with the Indian fur gatherers. Because a majority of the immigrants were soldiers, adventurers, and artisans rather than farmers, agriculture made little progress. It is part of the French-Canadian legend that this people displayed from the first a peculiar and dominant genius for agriculture, but this apparently is a fallacy. Mason Wade points out that only one and a half acres were cleared in the first twenty years of the colony's life, and in 1754 almost a quarter of the population was urban.²⁹ It was not until after the English Conquest

²⁹Wade, pp. 34-40

in 1759, when the English took over the fur trade, that Quebec became primarily an agricultural region.

A glance at a description of Canadian society in the mid-seventeenth century as given by Guy Frégault will verify that there were few agriculturalists among the early settlers--the population had grown to 3,418 inhabitants. Of these about one hundred were members of the clergy; sixty or seventy families comprised the well-to-do middle class, higher civil servants and business men. At the bottom of the social scale were 400 indentured servants and the remaining populace of about two thousand five hundred consisted of workers and peasants.³⁰

It is not easy to draw precisely the line which separated the middle class from the upper middle class, or that which divided the latter from the aristocracy. But, the lesser nobility or the upper middle class, the upper stratum of society enriched by commerce, set the tone of Canadian society.

Around 1750, just prior to the English Conquest, the social structure of Canada appeared to be made up of peasants and artisans at the bottom of the stratification, and at the top an aristocracy in which were included the civil and military officers, who, having control of affairs, thought they had the destiny of the country in their hands.

³⁰G. Frégault, Canadian Society in the French Regime (The Canadian Historical Association, c/o Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa), p. 7

However, the planned destiny of their country was soon to change. Conquest by the English in 1759 was the great historical event which effected the French society, and which has placed the French on the defensive--a trait which still exists today, over two hundred years later. After the Conquest, the position of the French-Canadians was indeed desperate, and few contemporaries would have wagered much on their national survival. The New France which had been so utterly dependent upon the Mother country throughout its existence was now separated and isolated from the France which had supplied its rulers, its apostles, its educators, its ideas, and its books. If the French-Canadians were to remain French under the aegis of a foreign power whose language, religion, laws, and customs were very different, they would have to do so on the strength of their own resources.

Pending the determination of the peace, the victors showed remarkable tolerance toward the faith, laws, and customs of the French-Canadians. Though eighteenth century England was strongly "anti-papist", the practice of the Catholic religion was not interfered with, save that recruiting by the Jesuits and the Sulpicians was forbidden. Government was carried on through the old institutions in French, with the military governor and intendant under the old regime, and with the French-Canadian militia captains acting as local magistrates.

Under these conditions, peace and harmony existed in the French colony for about five years. When civil government was established in 1764, with the avowed program of remaking an old French colony into

a new English one, the society of Quebec took on drastic changes.

The economic basis of Canadian society, the fur trade, which constituted two-thirds of the value of the exports, was taken over by the English. With the loss of commerce, the only activity which would keep in the colony a middle class which had little interest in agriculture, the majority of the French elite returned to France. The remaining populace, though unskilled in tilling the soil, turned to agriculture as a means of livelihood.

Within a few years the country had lost the most influential and competent part of its ruling class, a part which could not survive outside of the political and economic framework of New France. Of those remaining, only the clergy maintained its prestige undiminished by the conquest. The French habitants looked for leadership to the clergy--the only remaining educated members of their own nation, language, and culture.

The French feared the loss of their religion. They were never prevented from practicing their religion, but refusal to take an oath of allegiance prevented them from being appointed to the council. Consequently council members were drawn largely from the army, though they soon became known as the "French party" because of the sympathy they displayed for the natives of the country. Judges, magistrates, and jurors also had to be chosen from among the British officers and merchants, and participation by the people was eliminated. These measures had the effect of uniting the French against the British, and of reviving "national antipathy" which had been eliminated

during the period of military rule.³¹

This mode of civil government was revoked in 1764 by the Quebec Act which is the Magna Carta of the French Canadians. By this Act, Catholics were assured the free exercise of their religion, which was no longer to be an obstacle to their preferment to any office or position, since a new form of oath was provided which offended none of their principles.

There was friction in the assembly over the election of a speaker and over the official use of French. After a sharp struggle, a French speaker was elected and bilingualism was recognized, even though it did not attain full legal status until 1867. Thus representative government was used at the outset by the French-Canadians to insure the last of the essential conditions of their national survival--the free use of their language in the official world.

The differences between French and English Canadians were not to subside with the coming of representative government, but rather to increase. The first elections produced some ethnic strife, and more arose from the fact that the English population, a fifteenth of the total, had almost a third of the seats in the assembly and a majority in both the legislative and executive councils. These unfavourable conditions weakened British-French relations, and the French established a strong bond within their own culture.

³¹Wade, pp. 42-7

Riddell claims that the foundation for the dominance of the Church in Quebec was laid by the important preliminary fact of the religious motive in the exploration and colonization of New France.³² Gerard Pelletier³³ recently stated that after the English Conquest, the British, because of the language barrier, allowed the French clergy to establish an education system. This action strengthened the power of the clergy, and intensified solidarity by uniting clergy and people in a common struggle to retain their laws and to defend their religion.

In 1830, in his report to the Crown, Lord Durham remarked on the dominant position of the Catholic clergy in French Canada.

The Catholic priesthood of this province have, to a remarkable degree, conciliated the goodwill of persons of all creeds; I know of no parochial clergy in the world whose practice of all Christian virtues, and zealous discharge of their clerical duties, is more universally admitted and has been of more beneficial consequences. Possessed of incomes sufficient and even large according to the notions entertained in the country, and enjoying the advantage of education, they have lived on terms of equality and kindness with the humblest and the least instructed inhabitants of the rural districts. Intimately acquainted with the wants and characters of their neighbors, they have been the promoters and dispensers of charity, and the effectual guardians of morals of the people, and in the general absence of any institution of civil government, the Catholic Church has presented almost the only semblance of stability and organization,

³²W. A. Riddell, The Rise of Ecclesiastical Control in Quebec, (Longmans, Green and Co., London, 19 6), p. 100

³³G. Pelletier, M.P., Hochelaga Constitutency, Quebec, in a public lecture and discussion, Edmonton, Feb., 1967

and furnished the only effectual support of civilization and order.³⁴

It is evident, then, that the clergy were held in high esteem and were very influential as leaders before extensive industrial development began. A strong relationship existed among the clergy and French habitants long before their relationship with the labour movement.

As was pointed out earlier, as a result of unsatisfactory social conditions, strong attempts were being made during the last half of the nineteenth century to establish labour unions. Industrial enterprises were fairly numerous at this time, but progress was slow due to a depression period which continued from 1870 to 1890. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Canada experienced a period of rapid economic development and industrial growth. Reverend W. F. Ryan, in his recent study of the clergy and economic growth in Quebec, concluded that between 1896 and 1914 Quebec experienced an intensive economic spurt.

This was a period of rapid urbanization. By 1915 the province was no longer predominantly rural, but had an urban population of 49.6 per cent. During these decades, cities were expanding and improving their facilities. In addition, towns and villages were being founded and incorporated, and public works projects such as local town halls, court houses, market places, churches, school buildings, waterworks, and electric lighting were undertaken.

³⁴Ryan, p. 20

Manufacturing improved from producing industry groups of food and beverages, leather products, clothing, and wood products, to a higher industrial group such as iron and steel products, transportation equipment, textiles, paper products, tobacco products, and chemical products.³⁵

A basic transformation was seen in agriculture--the cereal-based agriculture was replaced by dairy farming, stock raising, and the crops associated with these two industries. This transformation of Quebec agriculture was largely a response to growing markets rather than a response to new methods arising out of labour scarcity.³⁶

It was in this milieu, at the beginning of the 20th century, that the Church first became involved in the labour union movement. Since economic development was taking place in other parts of Canada, and attempts were being made to unionize in these industrialized areas, and since unionization had begun in Quebec, the question arises--why did the Church become involved in the labour movement in Quebec but not in other parts of Canada? From the foregoing historical events, we may conclude that the strong relationship which existed among the clergy and laity as a result of the original purpose of colonization, as well as the disturbing effects of the English Conquest, was extended to the labour movement when the French habitants were suffering the exploitative effects of capitalism. It would appear,

³⁵Ryan, p. 39

³⁶Ryan, p. 45

then, that the cultural history of Quebec was the prime mover of the involvement of the clergy in the labour movement. This provokes a second question. Did the cultural history of Quebec offer a society which would be favorable to labour unionism?

CULTURAL EFFECTS AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCE

A prerequisite to the effects of culture as an environmental influence is an explanation of "culture". J. O. Hertzler points out that every human society has a culture. In fact, culture, above all else, explains man's uniqueness. Unlike any other species, man has always been distinguished by the fact that he is the culture-producing, culture-maintaining, and culture-perpetuating animal. He is never a merely passive product of automatic processes, but is always aggressive and creative in some measure. Man germinates ideas and comes to conclusions. He remembers what has been successful. In brief, man learns by experience.

It is obvious then, that maintaining a culture is something quite different than keeping it intact. An intact culture would mean a static culture, and hence an ever more archaic, inept, inadequate culture and a stagnant, functionally deteriorating society. The only adequate culture is a continually developing one.³⁷

³⁷J. O. Hertzler, American Social Institutions (Allyn and Bacon, Inc., Boston, 1961), p. 14

Certain authors such as Falardeau, Hughes, and Guindon promote the thesis that the culture of French Canada is an archaic and simple one.³⁸ And yet, the history reveals that many changes have taken place. Quebec has developed from a small trading post to one of the most highly industrialized provinces in Canada. This change will not substantiate an inadequate culture and a stagnant, functionally deteriorating society.

This study would agree with that of Garigue who claims that the patterns of social institutions prevented the rise of a specifically rural culture and that French-Canadian culture already had incorporated within itself all the elements necessary for large-scale urbanization. Garigue describes the cultural system:

There is a decided readiness to accept technical changes. Leadership is widely distributed and not limited to the parish priest. The loose segmentation of the community gives a great deal of scope for both social mobility and for autonomous action in certain fields. Although the parish is a religious unit, its religious organization has little to do with economic development.³⁹

Although the culture of Quebec is unique, nevertheless, it is a continually developing one. It is a culture capable of forming, maintaining, and developing a strong and efficient labour union.

A study by Kerr and Siegel suggests that increased social contact on and off the job and high homogeneity among workers have been

³⁸H. Guindon, "The Social Evolution of Quebec Reconsidered," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, 1960, p. 539

³⁹Guindon, p. 541

found to promote participation in the union.⁴⁰ They concluded also, that there is a relation between community structure and strike propensity among industrial workers. The highest propensity to strike was in the mining, maritime, and longshore industries; the lowest, in agriculture, trade, and the railroad industry.

Both conclusions would apparently be applicable to Quebec. The homogeneity of population, 88% being French and Catholic, provides suitable conditions for the formation of unions. The Church in Quebec is usually accused of prohibiting strikes, yet the study by Kerr and Siegel would reveal that this might also be due to the type of industry in operation. They suggest that agriculture, trade, and the railroad industry, all three of which are peculiar to Quebec, have the lowest propensity to strike. It may be concluded then that Quebec was an area which contained the necessary requirements for successful union organization.

The factor of homogeneity, plus the consequential feeling of inferiority, together with an indigenous fear of losing their language, religion, and culture, have caused the French populace to form a very strong bond within their own culture. This combination supplied rich ground for the development of the labour movement. It was inevitable that the clergy, as an educated caste, with its close relationship with the laity, should take such an active participation in the establishment and development of the labour union movement in Quebec.

⁴⁰Blau and W. Scott, Formal Organizations (Chandler Publishing Co., San Francisco, California, 1962), pp. 197-201

CHAPTER II

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE LABOUR UNION MOVEMENT OF QUEBEC FROM 1900-1967

A study of the evolution of the Catholic labour union from its foundation in 1901 to the present involves a rather intricate and detailed process. However, a brief summary of the major events which occurred during this evolution will be meaningful to our purpose. These major events include: a) the circumstances which led to its formation, b) the intentions of the Church in undertaking this project, c) the role of the clergy, d) the changes which occurred after World War II, e) the decline of clerical participation, and f) the present status of the union which was originated by the Church. As discovered previously, Canada at the turn of the century was well disposed to the idea of labour unionization.

FORMATIVE PERIOD -- 1900-1945

Social conditions in Quebec during the formative period were similar to those existing in other parts of Canada toward the end of the 19th. century. Lipton states that there was exploitation of children and women, low wages, industrial accidents, and poor living conditions. Strikes were prevalent; one of the major ones being the Quebec City printers' strike in 1887. The printers were then earning \$7 per week, some as low as \$5--wages they described as "near starvation". They demanded \$8 per week for day work, \$10 per week for night work, the 54-hour week (the nine-hour day), and overtime

of 20 cents an hour.⁴¹ Conditions were unbearable.

The close relationship which existed in Quebec among the clergy and laity made the clergy keenly aware of the poverty of the people. Concerning the women, Cardinal Taschereau declared: "I've heard parish priests in my diocese say that the majority of persons, especially girls, who leave their families to go and work in factories, returned run down by work, and consumptive for the want of ventilation in these factories".⁴² The French people looked to the clergy for leadership. The action undertaken by the clergy was delineated in the social encyclical of Leo XIII. By reference to these ideas the clergy were able to assist their people in the face of economic exploitation. It was clearly evident that these unsatisfactory social conditions were the concern of the Church.

Church officials in Quebec took their direction from higher Church authority, that is, from Pope Leo XIII's directives as set down in his papal encyclical, Rerum Novarum, published in 1891. A quotation from the encyclical will reveal the concerns of the Church regarding the existing social conditions:

But all agree, and there can be no question whatever, that some remedy must be found, and quickly found, for the misery and wretchedness which press so heavily at this moment on the large majority of the very poor. The ancient workmen's guilds were destroyed in the

⁴¹Canada, Royal Commission on the Relations of Capital and Labour, 1889, Evidence of Quebec, quoted in Lipton, p. 67

⁴²Canada, Royal Commission on the Relations of Capital and Labour, 1889, Evidence of Quebec, Ottawa, p. 368, in Lipton, p. 59

last century, and no other organization took their place....Hence by degrees it has come to pass that workingmen have been given over, isolated and defenceless, to the callousness of employers and the greed of unrestrained competition....And to this must be added the custom of working by contract, and the concentration of so many branches of trade in the hands of a few individuals, so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the masses of the poor a yoke little better than slavery itself....⁴³

...in a State it is ordained by nature that these two classes should exist in harmony and agreement....Each requires the other; capital cannot do without labour, nor labour without capital. Mutual agreement results in pleasantness and good order; perpetual conflict necessarily produces confusion and outrage... Religion teaches the labouring-man and the workman to carry out honestly and well all equitable agreement freely made; never to injure capital, or to outrage the person of an employer; never to employ violence in representing his own cause, nor to engage in riot or disorder....

Religion teaches the rich man and the employer that their work people are not their slaves; that they must respect in every man his dignity as a man and as a Christian; that labour is nothing to be ashamed of, if we listen to right reason and to Christian philosophy, but is an honourable employment, enabling a man to sustain his life in an upright and creditable way; and that it is shameful and inhuman to treat men like chattels to make money by, or to look upon them merely as so much muscle or physical power....Finally, the rich must religiously refrain from cutting down the workman's earnings, either by force, fraud, or by usurious dealing ...⁴⁴

When workpeople have recourse to a strike, it is frequently because the hours of labour are too long, or the work too hard, or because they consider their wages insufficient. The grave inconvenience of this not uncommon occurrence should be obviated by public remedial measures; for such paralysis of labour not only affects the masters and their workpeople, but

⁴³Rerum Novarum, in Husslein, Vol. 1, p. 168

⁴⁴Rerum Novarum, in Husslein, Vol. 1, p. 177-8

is extremely injurious to trade, and to the general interests of the public; moreover, on such occasions, violence and disorder are generally not far off, and thus it frequently happens that the public peace is threatened. The laws should be beforehand, and prevent these troubles from arising....⁴⁵

At this moment the condition of the working population is the question for the hour; and nothing can be of higher interest to all classes of the State than that it should be rightly and reasonably decided. But it will be easy for Christian workmen to decide it aright if they form associations, choose wise guides, and follow the same path which was trod by their fathers before them.⁴⁶

Rerum Novarum, according to Reverend Gerard Dion, was not the reorganization of the social order. It sought to refute some errors of the time and to establish some principles, fundamental to an order based on justice, in order to ameliorate the conditions of the workers in a world which was disregarding the dignity of man, and the value of his work, the social function of property, the nature of the economy and the relationships between economic and moral life. The three main principles were:

1. the right of association
2. the development of the economy with a view to the common good
3. the obligation of the state not to keep aloof from the economic world.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Rerum Novarum, in Husslein, Vol. 1, p. 188-90

⁴⁶Rerum Novarum, in Husslein, Vol. 1, p. 202-3

⁴⁷Rev. G. Dion, Director, Department of Industrial Relations, Laval University, Quebec, "Industry Council Plan," in Industrial Relations Seventy Years After Rerum Novarum (Secretariat Catholic Social Life Conference, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, 1961), p. 71

At that time, when the doctrine was non-intervention of the state in economic matters and when, in many countries, particularly in Canada, trade unions were either forbidden by law or considered dangerous even by well-thinking people, the affirmation of those principles by such an authority aroused enthusiasm and admiration among the workers as well as an understandable opposition in some other social groups.⁴⁸

Among the Catholic schools of social thinking, the principles were interpreted according to the tendencies of each one. In Quebec, they were viewed as a directive to form trade unions and the French clergy welcomed a tool which could be used in support of the exploited working class.

The formation of labour unions, as seen earlier, had already begun in Quebec. Nevertheless, the French clergy considered that the directives of Rerum Novarum gave them the right and possibly the obligation to proceed with the organization of Catholic labour unions, under the stated guidelines, which they felt were not being followed by some of the neutral unions.

Associations of every kind, and especially those of workmen, are now far more common than formerly. In regard to many of these there is no need at present to inquire whence they spring, what are their objects, or what means they use. But there is a good deal of evidence which goes to prove that many of these societies are in the hands of invisible leaders, and are managed on principles far from compatible with Christianity and the public well-being; and that they do their best to get into their hands the whole field of labour and

⁴⁸Dion, p. 71

to force workmen either to join them or to starve. Under these circumstances the Christian workmen must do one of two things; either join associations in which their religion will be exposed to peril or form associations among themselves--unite their forces and courageously shake off the yoke of an unjust and intolerable oppression. No one who does not wish to expose man's chief good to extreme danger will hesitate to say that the second alternative must by all means be adopted.⁴⁹

Members of the clergy believed that repudiation of moral principles and the increasing inequality of the social order were paving the road to extreme socialism, communism and fascism. Socialistic principles were becoming prevalent in the neutral unions in Quebec. These socialistic elements constituted one more circumstance which urged the Church to take an active part in the formation of Catholic unions following the prescribed guidelines as presented in Rerum Novarum.

There was a lapse of approximately ten years from the publication of Rerum Novarum in 1891 to its implementation. It was in 1901, Jamieson states, that the Church first became involved in the labour union movement in Quebec during a lockout in the boot and shoe industry, which came as a result of legislation by the manufacturers that workmen were forbidden to belong to professional unions.⁵⁰ Archbishop B  gin was asked to act as arbitrator and, in that capacity, he made the following statement:

The right to constitute an association of professional unions is a natural right, it has always existed and will always exist but, although this right cannot be

⁴⁹Rerum Novarum, J. Husslein, p. 198

⁵⁰Jamieson, p. 56

overlooked it does not follow that all the associations are legitimate. In order to exist and do good they must have an honest goal and the means to achieve must employ only those which comply with justice, honesty, and morality....I cannot approve the laws of the shoe makers' union unless they are modified.⁵¹

The Archbishop's recommendations, which were accepted, called upon the unions to change their constitutions and rules in order to have them comply with the principles of the encyclical, Rerum Novarum. In addition the unions consented to have a chaplain, named by religious authority, who would take part in their counsels and assist at meetings.

One year later, in 1902, in addition to the existing circumstances--the declaration of Rerum Novarum and the hope of curtailing the progress of socialism, a third circumstance arose which strengthened the development of the Catholic unions and was instrumental in confining them to a national level--expulsion from the Trades and Labour Congress.

H. A. Logan's study revealed that historically, the majority of the independent labour units in Canada were located in the province of Quebec and this condition was accentuated by the action of the Trades Congress in 1902, whose constitutional amendment at that time not only denied recognition to national unions where international unions of the same craft existed, but also deprived the national local bodies from representation on trades councils chartered

⁵¹M. L. Maltais, Les Syndicats Catholiques Canadiens (Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 1925), p. 56

by the congress. In urban Quebec these independent units formed city centrals of their own to deal with such matters as usually come within the purview of these bodies.⁵²

The three circumstances, then, which led to the formation of Catholic unions in Quebec were: 1) the publication of the papal encyclical, Rerum Novarum, which recognized the right of the worker to organize under proper guidance, b) the socialistic prevalence in the already existing neutral unions, and c) the action of the Trades Congress which barred independent units from international local councils.

During the period 1902 to 1912 Catholic unions were formed in various parts of Quebec, but none had formally repudiated the principle of religious neutrality. Logan advocates that "pure Catholic syndicalism" in Canada dates from the action of the Federation of Workers of Chicoutimi in 1912. Many of the neutral unions operating in Saguenay in the early nineteen hundreds were socialistic or had a large socialist element in their membership. The neutral unions were unquestionably anti-clerical, and the idea was generally held, although not always expressed, that the priest, in case of conflict between the worker and the employer, would be naturally on the side of the latter. In fact the mass of prejudice on the part of the neutral unions was enormous, and there was much distrust of clerical involvement in labour relations.⁵³

⁵²H. A. Logan, p. 318, referring to W. S. Ryder, Canada's Industrial Crisis of 1919, M.A. thesis University of British Columbia, unpublished

⁵³Logan, pp. 565-6

Once the decision was made to organize on a national and Catholic basis, the union began to prosper. Chicoutimi was thus in a true sense the pioneer. The experiment in moulding and organizing, sponsored by the Church through the clergy and carried through the pulp workers of the distant North by a small body of elite, furnished both precedent and stimulus for the rapid spread of the movement in other places.⁵⁴

At the time, Monsignor Eugene LaPointe was parish priest at Chicoutimi. He was very instrumental in the successful establishment of the labour union. Prior to this time, from 1869 to 1893, Eugene LaPointe lived and studied in Europe.⁵⁵ It would seem probable that his knowledge of the labour movement was acquired abroad, and once again one sees the influence of the European model of unionism being established in Quebec.

INITIAL INTENTIONS OF THE CHURCH IN BECOMING INVOLVED

The circumstances surrounding church involvement having been established, the question arises concerning motives.

As a young seminarian in Quebec, Eugene LaPointe witnessed a scene which impressed him so deeply that he vowed to do something for the starving and angry mobs in the street who cried out: "Du pain ou du sang!" -- /bread or blood!⁵⁶ This scene which depicted exploitation,

⁵⁴Logan, p. 566

⁵⁵Maltais, p. 5

⁵⁶Maltais, p. 4

along with the intention of Monsignor LaPoint, and the social teaching declared in Rerum Novarum, would lead one to conclude that the original intention of the clergy in forming the labour union was the welfare of the workers.

Les règlements de la Fédération furent élaborés par Mgr Lapointe, en conformité avec les Encycliques des Papes Léon XII et Pie X. Ces règlements devaient servir de modèle aux constitutions adoptées par les autres groupements catholiques que se formèrent dans la suite.⁵⁷

A quotation from the Constitutions of the Syndicates will verify the conclusion:

The primary purpose of the syndicate is: to support the labour movement, to protect and defend the rights of the working class, to promote love of country and respect of its laws, to claim for the worker the place and land that God has reserved for him.⁵⁸

Logan explains that the unit of organization is the local syndicate with its primary purpose being the welfare of the worker. But, in addition, there is a secondary structure which focused on education.⁵⁹ In 1918, Abbé Edmond Hébert founded a center of studies in Montreal. It had as its objective, the formation of an educated worker, capable of taking on himself the direction of the Catholic workers' movement. The program included courses in sociology, studies to acquaint them with the international unions in all their aspects, and a workers' chronicle dealing with the principal

⁵⁷Maltais, p. 7

⁵⁸Labour Organization in Canada, 1931, Article 3, p. 56

⁵⁹Logan, p. 572

events of interest to labour during the current week.⁶⁰ It would appear then that the intention of the Church was the education of union members.

A quotation from a conference given by Father Massicotte in 1913, will serve to explain the third original intention of the Church with regard to the policy on unions:

We are three priests among you and some of you may think that the clergy wants to assume direction of the new union--this is not true. We are now playing the major role because the organization has to be founded on solid ground. As soon as the unions will be capable of operating alone we will pass on its direction to the laborers themselves....The clergy has always been led to help the working class. This is a good omen that we bring to you today. In return, we expect nothing but the personal satisfaction of having done you some good.⁶¹

In summary of the foregoing, it appears that the Church had three original intentions when formation of the unions first began:

- a) to assist the working class, b) to educate the union members, and
- c) to pass along the direction of the union to the labourers as soon as they were capable of accepting the responsibility.

How did the clergy go about carrying out these intentions? What was their role? The 13th Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, described the role of the clergyman: "His role consists in guiding the members; to advise them of their duties; to support them in their just claim; and to maintain among them the spirit of justice and forbearance in their relations with the employers."⁶²

⁶⁰Maltais, p. 20

⁶¹Maltais, p. 33

⁶²13th Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1923, p. 12

Regarding his powers, the 21st Annual Report of the Organization of Labour in Canada states that the constitution of the Catholic Workers provides for the appointment of a general chaplain, and that each delegate body and local national Catholic syndicate also has a chaplain whose powers are similar to those of the general chaplain. The section governing the powers of the chaplain reads as follows:

The general chaplain is by right a members of all congresses of the federation and of the federal bureau. He may attend the meeting of all the committees formed by the federation or send a representative. He exercises, in deliberations, the same rights as those exercised by delegates or members belonging to the congress whereat such discussions take place, and is subject, like them, to the usual rules of procedure. The chaplain does not vote. The general chaplain may attend the meetings and take part in the proceedings of any organization affiliated with the federation. The chaplain depends solely, in the exercise of his functions, on the religious authorities by which he was appointed.

The general chaplain has the right to give his personal opinion on any questions, like all delegates; but his proper function is to represent the church among the Catholic syndicated workmen. It is for him to state and recall, whenever it is needed, the Catholic principles and doctrine, and he only fills his mission when he asks the congress and the committees to make their resolutions and conduct conform to the Catholic principles and doctrine.⁶³

The role and power of the clergy provided them with rather significant control of the activities of the local unions. It is worthy to note at this time, that all executive positions were held by the laity--the clergy did not function as presidents, vice-presidents, or secretaries of the organizations.

⁶³21st Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1931,
p. 57

By exercising their function as advisors, the clergy endeavoured to maintain the principles of union activity on a high level. Two of the key attitudes of the Church toward certain union practices which are often misunderstood are the closed shop and the strikes. Abbé Edmond Hébert explains the Church's teaching on the closed shop:

The closed shop has a double interpretation, one conformable to the principles of Catholic morals and the other with a taint of socialism. When a closed shop has for object the raising of apprenticeship, the bettering of trades, and the formation of honest and competent workmen, it may become one of the clauses of a just and fair agreement. When on the contrary the closed shop's only aim is to swell the number of members in a union, ostracise non-union workmen, and impose on the employer incompetent workmen, it then becomes a principle dangerously subversive of the social order.⁶⁴

Concerning the strike, it has been inferred that Catholic unionism does not place dependence on the strike as a chief means of obtaining its objects. As quoted earlier from Rerum Novarum, Pope Leo XIII referred to the strike as detrimental to both employers and employees, harmful to commerce, and injurious to society's best interests. In this instance, the Pope was pointing out the negatives effects of a strike, which should be avoided if possible.

When workpeople have recourse to a strike, it is frequently because the hours of labour are too long, or the work too hard, or because they consider their wages insufficient. The grave inconvenience of this not uncommon occurrence should be obviated by public remedial measures; for such paralysis of labour not only affects the masters and their work-people, but is extremely injurious

⁶⁴Programme--Souvenir du Premier Congrès, 1922, p. 12 in Logan, p. 592

to trade, and to the general interests of the public; moreover, on such occasions, violence and disorder are generally not far off, and thus it frequently happens that the public peace is threatened. The laws should be beforehand, and prevent these troubles from arising.⁶⁵

The Catholic union's attitude is given by Gerard Tremblay, early secretary of the Montreal Secretariat. He argues that "The National and Catholic syndicates never objected in principle to a just strike.... For the strike is based on the right of legitimate defence, and upon the freedom of work."⁶⁶ But a strike to be just must fulfil four conditions:

The strikers must be bound by any just contract. If, in fact, a just contract has been formed between employers and employees, the parties concerned must make it a point to observe it. But it is evident that if the contract is not just, the workman is not tied to its clauses. And if the employer violates his own contract, the worker has a right to revoke it. 2) Strikers must have exhausted all means of conciliation. 3) Strikers must have a sufficiently good reason for declaring a strike. This reason must be proportioned to the importance of the evils which always result from a strike; loss of time, harm done to industry, etc. 4) Strikers must have a hope of success. They shall have to weight with caution possibilities of success or failure. Labour leaders who provoke a strike when they are about certain that it will not succeed, work directly against the best interests of the labour class.⁶⁷

Moreover, Mr. Tremblay notes that in general the advantages derived by strikers are far outweighed by the losses they suffer. The policy of the Catholic union is that conciliation be urged on all occasions as the means of overcoming difficulties and arriving at a good

⁶⁵Cf. ftn. 49, p. 30

⁶⁶Tract 5, in Logan, p. 591

⁶⁷Tract 5, in Logan, p. 591

understanding, but when it does fail, steps toward arbitration must be taken.⁶⁸ The Church was ridiculed for its endeavours to maintain peace in industrial relations in Canada, and yet the same practice prevails today in all unions--settlement by conciliation or arbitration if at all possible.

Returning to the historical evolution, one sees the various Catholic unions moving toward federation, and in 1918 the formation of the National Central Trades Council in Quebec city. Similar central councils were formed in a number of other districts, and later in the year a conference was called for the province of Quebec as a whole. Steps were taken at subsequent annual conferences to form a province-wide federation of Catholic unions. Finally, in 1922, a permanent organization was established and adopted the title, Canadian Catholic Confederation of Labour (CCCL), a name which it retained until 1960.⁶⁹

Growth of the Catholic unions since the early twenties has been considerable but not spectacular. It dropped to 25,000 in the unemployment of 1930-32, rose to 50,000 in 1937, in 1944 stood at approximately 70,000, and increased to 142,522 in 1965 (Cf. table p. 10). Using the census population figures of 1941 it would seem that over 8% of the 815,000 wage-earners in the province were in Catholic unions as compared with 14.5% in other unions. In 1944 the Catholic unions contained about 10.3% of the unionized forces of Canada.⁷⁰

⁶⁸Logan, p. 591

⁶⁹Logan, p. 591

⁷⁰Lipton, p. 266

Lipton describes trade unionism in all of Canada as making great advances from 1939 to 1948. This was connected with the war effort-- the expansion of production, the relative scarcity of labour, the need for concessions to win working class support for the war.⁷¹ It was during this intensive industrial growth that the labour movement in Quebec also began to make real headway. From 1940 to 1945 there was a great increase in the industrial and the wage-earning population of the Province. For the first time in the history of French Canada, the Canadian Congress of Labour and the CIO unions, whose policies have always been more aggressive and radical than those of the AFL-TLC group, began to launch intensive organizing campaigns in the new war industries in the Montreal region. The whole idea of union organization started to spread much more rapidly among the French-speaking workers.⁷²

POST-WAR DEVELOPMENT -- 1945 - 1967

During the years immediately following the end of the war, far-reaching important changes took place in the policies and structure of the Catholic Confederation of Labour. Administration of the organization was assumed by progressive and forward-looking young officials. This development was accompanied by equally significant changes in ideas on social matters on the part of many groups in the Catholic Church in French Canada. One of the prime leaders in this school of

⁷¹Logan, p. 571

⁷²Jamieson, p. 58

thought was the Reverend Georges Henri Levesque, former director of the Department of Social Studies at Laval University in Quebec City. He realized that the Catholic Church in Quebec must alter its general approach to the changes in the social and economic structure of the Province which had occurred since the turn of the 20th century.⁷³

The influence of these groups in the clergy, combined with that of the new officials, had wrought a complete transformation in the CCCL since 1945. The federation had become much more aggressive and radical in its general tactics.

The Confederation showed its new spirit for the first time in the strike for better working conditions which one of its affiliated unions conducted at the town of Asbestos during the spring of 1949. Lipton refers to this strike as: "A milestone on the Quebec workers' road to higher wages and union recognition".⁷⁴ Lipton describes the cause of the strike as being rejection by the company (Johns-Manville Corporation of the U.S.) for higher wages and improved safety and sanitary conditions. The strike was one of the most brutal ever experienced in Canadian labour history. The Duplessis government was in power at the time and the strikers were shown no sympathy--the provincial police under order from Duplessis showed much unnecessary brutality. Lipton describes a scene.

The union's intention in withdrawing the picketers had been to avert bloodshed and violence. However,

⁷³W. E. Greening, "The Changing Labor Picture in French Canada," Dalhousie Review, (Vol. 36, 1956-57), pp. 156-62

⁷⁴Lipton, p. 323

the provincial police burst into the town of Asbestos, visited reprisals on such union members as they could lay their hands on, crashed into the premises of a church and, encountering there some young union members from Thetford Mines, they beat them savagely. Then came the reading of the Riot Act and the arrest of 125 strikers and townspeople. Some of those arrested were taken to company quarters and there interrogated, Duplessis style--they were given savage beatings.⁷⁵

Archbishop Joseph Charbonneau, of Montreal, and Archbishop Maurice Roy of Quebec, were most sympathetic to the strikers and supported them to the end. Duplessis sent an emissary, the Minister of Labour, Antonio Barette, to Rome to obtain withdrawal of support from the strikers by the ecclesiastical authorities.⁷⁶ Not long after the strike Archbishop Charbonneau submitted his resignation.

At the end of three months, after much hardship, the asbestos miners emerged victorious from their strike. It was a victory for the trade union movement of Quebec in general, and more particularly for the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour. The victory strengthened the militant trend within the organization, and influenced other social strata such as the middle classes in the province. The Asbestos strike was a major moment in the progressive evolution of the workers of Quebec and their trade union movement.⁷⁷

This strike has taken on symbolic significance as the time when the CCCL came of age, when it proved its independence, its courage, its new aggressiveness, and its willingness to oppose authority.

⁷⁵Lipton, p. 324

⁷⁶Lipton, p. 324-5

⁷⁷Lipton, p. 325

The CCCL had come of age, and the role played by the clergy in the formation of the unions began to decline. The influence of the chaplains remained extensive throughout the interim between the wars. Although laymen shouldered the administrative responsibility, they nevertheless relied heavily on the advice of the clergy.

Having seen the organization's ability to operate independently during the Asbestos strike, the Church realized that its function in the union was no longer necessary. Archbishop Roy made the following statement which indicated the exact role of the clergy in the future:

...he is neither leader, director, propagandist nor business agent. In the beginning there was need for the chaplain of these organizations to go now and then beyond his normal functions. Unionism today no longer requires this unusual action. The chaplain must take upon himself the noble function of educator.⁷⁸

Possibly the Church retained its position of organizer too long. Perhaps there was coercion for independence on the part of the lay leaders. At the 36th Annual Convention (1957) Archbishop Roy stated very clearly the Church's attitude toward the situation:

Your movement has reached adulthood. The Church is the first to recognize your legitimate freedom to declare yourselves readily with regard to the choice of the means to be taken in the professional field. So you must have the courage to make your own decisions; you must also accept responsibility for these decisions and not yield to the temptation to make the Church responsible, after the event, for steps which it did not dictate to you and which you were right in taking of your own accord.⁷⁹

⁷⁸S. H. Barnes, "The Evolution of Christian Trade Unionism in Quebec," in Industrial and Labor Relations Review, 1958, pp. 568-9

⁷⁹36th Annual Convention of the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour, in the Labour Gazette, 1957, p. 1442

The minutes of the meeting do not reveal the attitude of the union leaders or union members.

The actual influence of the clergy now stems largely from their prestige as representatives of the Church and from their own abilities in the field of labor relations rather than from a formal right to be heard or from a power of veto. Their chief function now seems to be to represent the viewpoint and interests of the Church within the CCCL. If they are influential it is because their wisdom and knowledge are respected, not merely because they are chaplains.

ATTEMPTS TO AFFILIATE WITH THE CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS

Since 1953 there have been numerous negotiations on the question of affiliation between the French Union (CCCL) and the English International Union (CLC). At the Annual Convention of the CCCL in 1955, President Gerard Picard expressed his view of affiliation: "Preliminary discussion on the subject within the CCCL during the year indicated that the membership had not yet grasped the full implications of the merger....The CCCL would stand to gain by keeping up the study of this question for another year before adopting a position."⁸⁰ Picard's oblique reference to possible difficulties in the merger movement unleashed a long and sometimes harsh discussion which turned up a core of delegates who were strongly opposed to the whole idea on any basis.

⁸⁰Labour Gazette, Vol. 55, No. 11 (Nov., 1955), p. 1271

Jean Marchand, Secretary of the Confederation, in a speech given to a labour group about the same time, made the position of the CCCL executive officers more clear:

Organic labour unity is not an absolute value to which all other values must be subjected, and the CCCL must not forget its origin, its past and its ideology in exchange for amalgamation with the international unions. ...In place of organic labour unity, what is needed is a formula which would respect the characteristics of each group but which would be of a nature to satisfy the labour world's instinct of solidarity.⁸¹

Following a full day's discussion during which the delegates were unanimously opposed to any organic affiliation, a motion was accepted that a five-member committee be appointed to prepare a well-considered resolution on the affiliation question.⁸²

One year later, at the 1956 annual meeting, it was decided that the committee should meet jointly with representatives of the Trades Labour Congress (TLC) and the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) in an endeavour to work out terms for the participation of the CCCL in the Canadian Labour Congress without giving up its identity. Six months later, the committee recommended merger of the CCCL as a body. It would thus assume the status of a national industrial union within the Canadian Labour Congress.

May, 1956, saw the merger of the Quebec Federations of the CCL and the TLC.⁸³ The new Quebec Federation of Labour passed a resolution which urged the executive of the CLC to find an affiliation

⁸¹Labour Gazette, 1955, p. 1266

⁸²Labour Gazette, 1955, p. 1266

⁸³Labour Gazette, 1957, p. 760

formula which would facilitate the merger of the CCCL with the CLC. However, affiliation was not that easily accomplished.

At the 1958 Convention, General Secretary Jean Marchand reported that to date it had been unable to reach agreement with the CLC negotiators. The fact was that in 1955, the principle of affiliation as adopted by the CCCL Convention, provided that the CCCL could keep its integrity and its freedom to expand. The latter point was apparently the stumbling block. Report from Jean Marchand at the 1960 Convention declared:

The Canadian Labour Congress would have no objection to granting the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour the status of a national union on condition its affiliated unions have the right to negotiate for mergers with our syndicates and federations. If the CCCL accepts this condition, there is no doubt that, strictly speaking, it will no longer have the status of a national union within the meaning of the Constitution of the CLC.⁸⁴

Two major issues which were to prevent unification were: first, the growing numerical strength of the Catholic and national unions and second, the developing of neo-nationalism which the unions themselves had done so much to create.

At the height of the debate on affiliation, President Picard read without comment a telegram signed by the Ligue d'Action Nationale. It petitioned the convention to abstain from any consideration of merging with the International unions on the grounds that

⁸⁴Labour Gazette, 1960 p. 1270

the continued existence of a vital and exclusively French-Canadian labour organization was fundamental to the restoration and the maintenance of French Canada's constitutional rights, and to the future economic development of Quebec by and for French-Canadians.⁸⁵ It was chiefly the simple act of procrastination, however, that finished affiliation negotiations. With the passage of time, the interest of the general membership waned, the ardor of the active advocates of affiliation cooled, and the threat of break-away unions became progressively weaker.

F. A. Isbester of McMaster University claims that the affiliation issue was never defeated--it simply disappeared, drowned in the nationalism which buoyed up the hopes of the Confederation's post-war executives for continued independence. "I used to be all in favour of the merger", said a post-war French-speaking immigrant.

It seemed to be pointless and self-defeating to have the labour movement divided along such arbitrary lines. Then I came to live outside of Quebec; I learned how little real respect English Canada has for the French language and culture. After a few years you can't help being assimilated in this environment. Now although I no longer belong to the union, I wish them well, I hope they never affiliate. They are too vital a safeguard of the interests of French Canada.⁸⁶

This statement, simple and direct, is a perfect personal expression of the change which came over Quebec beginning in 1959.

Apparently the French union would not agree to the affiliation requirement as requested by the CLC. But from the viewpoint of the

⁸⁵Labour Gazette, 1956, p. 1392

⁸⁶F. A. Isbester, Doctoral Thesis, 1966, p. 49 (Interview with former CNTU official who cannot be identified.)

CLC, there were obstacles on the part of the French union. The fact that the French union was a confessional union presented certain drawbacks to affiliation. This, however, was rectified at the 1960 Annual Convention. At this time the Convention approved a change of name-- from the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour to the Canadian National Trade Union (CNTU). The word "Catholic" was eliminated from the Confederation title. The confederation became a non-confessional union and membership was open to workmen of any faith. This obstacle having been overcome, two major issues remained: a) conservation of the CNTU's integrity; and b) conservation of the possibility of future expansion.

Discussion on affiliation for the five following years were kept in the background due to political questions which demanded the executives' full attention.

Again relations among the English-speaking and French-speaking unions came to the fore in the February 4, 1967 issue of the Financial Post which related up-to-date information on affiliation relations. It appears that the Confederation of National Trade Unions and the trade union movement in Canada may face their severest contest this year. The CNTU burst out of the province when it signed up the Resilient Floor Workers' union in Toronto. The CNTU's boast of being a truly national union organization has worried and irritated its greatest rival, the Canadian Labour Congress.⁸⁷

⁸⁷Financial Post, Feb. 4 1967, p. Q-6

According to the Financial Post of January 6, 1968, French-English amity is strained and a wide rift is developing between the English-speaking and French-speaking segments of the Canadian labour movement. The CNTU and the CLC are battling over Ottawa's proposed amendments to the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigations Act. Under the present policy, bargaining units which are naturally national--like the railways--are to be certified as members of a single union, not broken up regionally among several unions. If this policy were changed, the Confederation would likely win these workers quickly.⁸⁸ It appears that relations and particularly the question of affiliation are at low ebb.

Formal negotiations to affiliate the CNTU with the CLC have been continuing since 1953 with no apparent success. It is probable that the roots of the difficulty regress well beyond 1953. This provokes thought regarding the causes of this disunity among the French-speaking and English-speaking unions. The nature of this conflict will be explored in the following chapter.

⁸⁸Financial Post, Jan. 6, 1968, p. 24

CHAPTER III

NATURE OF THE CONFLICT AMONG THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING AND FRENCH-SPEAKING UNIONS

The previous chapter revealed that many unsuccessful attempts were made to affiliate the Quebec French-speaking unions with the International English-speaking unions. The basic cause of the conflict appears to be a difference in the principles of trade unionism as interpreted and exercised by the two organizations. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the nature of the conflict and to discover the underlying circumstances which urged the French-speaking unions to adhere to the national level of unionization. The roots of the difficulty regress well beyond the first negotiations to affiliate and reach back even to the early days of formation. Accusations as to the cause of the disagreements have been reciprocated by both parties.

The English International leaders accused the French unions of religious exclusiveness. Since membership was to be entirely Catholic, Protestant workers, according to the Ninth Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, complained that they were given no protection by these unions.⁸⁹ Logan treats this problem very well when he explains that the French unions (cognizant of the European method of unionization where Protestants formed unions under the direction of

⁸⁹Ninth Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, p. 43

their clergy, and united their voices with Catholics in affairs of common concern) expected that the Protestant population in Quebec would form their own local unions under the direction of the Protestant ministers. However, this European model was not adopted, probably due to the small Protestant population in Quebec, and the Catholic unions offered associate membership to non-Catholics.⁹⁰ This associate membership was extended to full membership in 1960, as was discovered in the preceding chapter. This idea of following denominational lines with regard to organization has been given little attention by the critics of the movement as being detrimental to unionism in general.

Of more importance is the indictment by the English Internationals that the French had divided the forces of labour into two hostile groups. The English claimed that this weakened the bargaining power of labour by introducing an undesirable form of competition in the labour commodity. They claimed that the employers of Montreal were well aware of the rivalry that existed, and played off one organization against the other, the consequence of which was cheaper labour prices than in other Canadian centers. The French unions were accused of frustrating strikes called by the English unions.⁹¹

Tract 19 justifies the French unionists for this division in labour with the rejoinder that there was division before their entry

⁹⁰Logan, p. 601

⁹¹Logan p. 601

into the field--that the Canada Trades and Labour Congress, through its action in expelling all but international unions in 1902, is the party most responsible for division.⁹² The Internationals claim that their progressive demands have continually been balked by the French; while the latter retorted that one of their chief effects on labour activities was to purge them of those radical and revolutionary tactics to which all labour movements not founded on unchanging principles have a tendency to run.⁹³

A review of the literature on the subject reveals that there were more penetrating causes which deterred the French union from affiliating with the Internationals. Some of the causes were: a) the obvious lack of organization on the international level, b) the presence of communist radicalism in the Internationals, c) nationalistic thinking on the part of the French, d) refusal to concede control of the educational system to the International unions, and e) sociological and psychological factors prevalent within the ranks of the French unionists. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to the examination of the individual causes.

OBVIOUS LACK OF ORGANIZATION ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

At intervals over the past seventy years or more, Canadian trade

⁹²Tract 19, in Logan, p. 601

⁹³Logan, p. 601

unionism has been rent asunder.⁹⁴ In 1902, the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada dismissed the Knights of Labour and national unions which were "dual" to international unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labour. The twenty-three expelled organizations formed the National Trades and Labour Congress which became known as the Canadian Federation of Labour. In 1919, a considerable number of Western unionists left the TLC to form the One Big Union. The CFL and other national unions formed the All-Canadian Congress of Labour in 1927. The executive of the TLC, in 1939, suspended the Canadian unions affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations in the United States. These expelled unions formed a Canadian C.I.O. committee.

Late in 1939 the All-Canadian Congress of Labour and the Canadian Congress of Industrial Organizations, both based on the industrial, as against the craft principle, agreed to unite in the Canadian Congress of Labour. This was a remarkable achievement; for though both bodies believed in industrial unionism, the ACCL had not only been a purely Canadian body, but had consistently and fiercely attacked international unionism, while the Canadian CIO committee was made up wholly of Canadian branches of international unions. The merger of the two was made possible only by the CIO's agreement that the Canadian sections of its international unions should have full autonomy, and that the new Congress also should be fully

⁹⁴The history used here is taken from E. Forsey, "The Movement Towards Labour Unity in Canada," as published in Canadian Labour Economics, A. E. Kovacs (McGraw-Hill Company of Canada, Ltd., 1961), pp. 75-90

autonomous. Therefore, at the end of 1940, there were three central organizations: the Trade and Labour Congress, the Canadian Congress of Labour, and the Canadian and Catholic Congress of Labour.

In 1941 the executive of the CCL suggested an international joint council of the American Federation of Labour, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the Trade and Labour Congress, and the Canadian Congress of Labour. The TLC rejected this proposal.

Again in 1947, the CCL convention called for "organic unity" with the TLC and instructed the incoming executive to persist in their efforts to create one large labour organization in Canada. The TLC executive replied that they had tried to create unity of action but that their efforts had failed and that they had been bitterly opposed by other trade union bodies with resulting discord in the TLC ranks. The TLC executive concluded that, even though unity of action in one body is of paramount importance, the objectives of unified action must be held in abeyance until a clear concise policy of unity can be worked out among the executives of the Trade and Labour Congress and other Trade Union bodies.⁹⁵

Meanwhile, the AFL president, William Green, declared flatly that he thought the two Canadian congresses ought to merge. But again, nothing happened. This was possibly due to the fact that the TLC and the AFL had a disagreement over the former's refusal to expel the Machinists Union, which had withdrawn from the AFL.

⁹⁵Forsey, p. 78

At the 1948 and 1949 conventions, resolutions were passed favouring unification. It was not until 1950, however, that any progress towards unity became apparent. The following year the TLC withdrew due to inaccurate information that the CCL was endorsing the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) as the political arm of Labour.

In 1952, in response to a request for unification, the president of the TLC revealed that his dissatisfaction with the prior endeavour to unite arose from the action of the CCL in trying to persuade the Government to give it the nomination of the workers' delegate to the International Labour Organization in alternate years.

Finally, on March 9, 1955, the two unions reached agreement on a "statement of principles", and the complete merger was announced two months later. The first TLC-CCL convention empowered the incoming executive to work out terms of affiliation of the CCCL.

Why did it take so long for the TLC and the CCL to produce any appreciable results to unity? One reason was the difference of principles--craft versus industrial unions. Another reason could be attributed to personality clashes which existed within each Congress as well as the haranguing between the Congresses. Divergent policies played a part, notably on political action. The CCL, as already noted, had endorsed the CCF, and had adhered to that policy, while the TLC had adhered firmly to the Gompers tradition of non-partisanship.

The French and Catholic Union on various occasions was requested

to join the TLC-CCL, but it is readily apparent that the great disunity which existed among the involved unions delayed cooperation from the CCCL executive. To this day the CCCL has never affiliated with the International unions.

COMMUNIST RADICALISM

The Papal Encyclical, Divini Redemptoris (Aetheistic Communism), defines the doctrine of modern communism as:

...the principles of dialectical and historical materialism previously advocated by Marx, of which the theoreticians of Bolshevism claim to possess the only genuine interpretation. According to this doctrine, there is in the world only one reality, matter, the blind forces of which evolve into plant, animal, and man. Even human society is nothing but a phenomenon and form of matter, evolving in the same way. By a law of inexorable necessity and through a perpetual conflict of forces, matter moves toward the final synthesis of a classless society.⁹⁶

The French people of Quebec were very much aware of the results sustained from a communist government; and they feared the loss of their religion, language, and culture. It was reported that the International unions were infiltrated with the principles of communism; and in an endeavour to oppose this foreign element, the French union refused to affiliate with the English-speaking unions. The question arises as to whether or not the International unions actually

⁹⁶Pius XI, Pope, Divini Redemptoris, Papal Encyclical, 1937, in Husslein, Vol. II, 1942, p. 344

were permeated with communistic principles, or was this a figment of the imagination, or of propaganda, on the part of the French unions?

A description of the penetration of communism into the International unions as given by Logan⁹⁷ and verified by Lipton's⁹⁸ account will serve to illustrate that the French union's concern was warranted, and that their endeavour to combat communism by strengthening their own union was, indeed, justified.

Logan states that after 1920 the most significant revolutionary movement in Canada was that stemming from Russia. Although the movement is essentially political and militaristic, it has, throughout the years, sought to use the trade unions as an appropriate vehicle for expression. It has operated within the established organizations (international and national), endeavouring to re-shape them and turn them to its own revolutionary purposes.

The Third (Communist) International, a revolutionary political organization, was formed in Moscow on March 6, 1919. In order to propagate its doctrine in the various labour unions throughout the world, this body, in July 1921, established another union known as the Red International of Labour Unions. The purposes of this organization were: a) to organize the working class for the overthrow of capitalism, b) the destruction of the bourgeois state and the setting

⁹⁷Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1922, pp. 174-6 in Logan, pp. 331-43

⁹⁸Lipton, pp. 188-9, 225-7, 264, 284

up of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and c) establish an international union which would seize all the means of production and establish the Communist Commonwealth.⁹⁹

The Canadian affiliate of the Communist International was known as the Workers' Party of Canada. In 1922, headquarters were located in Toronto. It had close fraternal relations with the Communist Party of the United States, but recognized the Moscow body as the only real center of world revolutionary activities. A formal purpose of the Communist Party in Canada was to elect its people to the legislature of the Dominion.¹⁰⁰ This purpose was never fulfilled in Canada.

The original representative organization in North America (as created in 1921) was the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL) with headquarters in New York; the Canadian section, still affiliated with Moscow, was known as District 4, with head office at Toronto.

The first National Convention of the Workers' Party of Canada was held at Toronto in April 1922, and the platform was as follows:

1. To permeate the labour unions and strive to replace the present reactionary leadership by revolutionary leadership.
2. To participate in the elections and general political life of the country.
3. To lead in the fight for the immediate needs of the workers, broaden and deepen their

⁹⁹Logan, p. 330

¹⁰⁰Logan, p. 331

demands, organize and develop out of their every day struggles a force for the abolition of capitalism.¹⁰¹

Guest speaker at the first National Convention was Earl Browder, managing editor of the Labour Herald of New York, official organ of the TUEL. He called the AFL the most reactionary body in the world, and suggested that Canada take on the revolutionary tactics of the TUEL.

Representatives from Montreal, Toronto, Guelph, and Winnipeg attended the first conference of the whole body of the TUEL which was held at Chicago in August, 1922. Delegate Tim Buck from Toronto Local 235 of the International Association of Machinists reported that: the league was already a power in the Canadian Trade Union movement; the militant workers had learned by experience the fallacy of secession; and they were placing their hopes on consolidation through amalgamation, and in the programme of the league.¹⁰² However, Mr. Buck had overstated the accomplishment, as the Labour Department report for 1924 indicated that the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union was the only Canadian organization that had affiliated.

At the 1924 meeting of the RILU in Moscow, Tim Buck, secretary of the Canadian section of the TUEL, was elected as Canada's representative on the Executive Bureau. At the same convention, the following program of action was laid down for the TUEL in

¹⁰¹Labour Organization in Canada, 1922, pp. 177-9

¹⁰²Labour Organization in Canada, 1922, p. 189

Canada:

1. Press for industrial unionism especially in the railway industry.
2. Bring the Canadian Federation of Labour back under the TLC unions and work against dual movements like that exhibited by the rebels in the coal mines of District 26.
3. Educate the Catholic Union membership through the preparation of special leaflets to weaken the demoralizing influence of the clergy and draw the best clergymen into /sic/ the trade union movement.
4. Strengthen the Trades and Labour Councils.
5. Develop a constructive autonomy for Canada within the continental trade union movement so that the Canadian movement centering in the TLC may be free to function as a unit.
6. Hold frequent conferences and local meetings.
7. Practice national strikes frequently.¹⁰³

Although the foregoing represents the goals of the Communist TUEL and not the accomplishments, it is easily understood, that in the face of these aims, the CCCL was forced to take every precaution in an endeavour to halt the TUEL's anticipated plans. The CCCL reacted to strengthen its element of confessional unionism and developed a positive abhorrence to the international unions, who seemed to harbour elements of atheistic communism.

This initial effort of the TUEL met with little success; and in 1927 and 1928 the Communists found themselves chiefly on the defensive. During this time, the TUEL received general repudiation

¹⁰³RILU Report, 1924, p. 145, in Logan, pp. 335-6

by the national unions, and suffered greatly by division within. The clear missionary message of the early revolution became confused in the differing interpretations of policy by Stalin and Trotsky, and the hostile lines drawn in Russia were imposed upon the members in Canada. In 1931 the Communist Party was declared illegal in Canada, and eight of its leaders were arrested.¹⁰⁴

Nevertheless, the Communists were undefeated, and in 1929 the party organized in the United States the Trade Union Unity League which was, in effect, a re-organization of policies, and a continuation of the Trade Union Educational League. The Canadian counterpart of the new organization took the name of the Workers' Unity League. The Unity League, as well as working within established unions, organized itself among the unemployed and in industries where no other unions existed. The ultimate purpose of the WUL was to overthrow capitalism and its so-called institutions of exploitation, and to set up a State where the power would be in a workers and farmers government. The League made considerable progress and, in 1934, had a total membership of 24,253. One year later, Moscow was threatened with fascism and sought help from all its branch leagues. While some of the leaders of the WUL resisted, and refused to take action, the majority accepted the party judgment. Shortly thereafter, the WUL and its constituent unions ceased to exist.¹⁰⁴

Several of the leaders continued in the trade union and won significant gains in industries such as electrical products, lumber,

¹⁰⁴Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1931, pp. 166-70

mining, automobiles, textiles, etc. A number of the largest and most important unions in the CCL had come under Communist leadership, including Canadian branches of the International Woodworkers of America, the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, the United Automobile Workers, and the United Electrical Workers, as well as a number of purely Canadian organizations.¹⁰⁵

Communists were in positions of leadership among some of the most important TLC affiliates, including the Canadian branches of the United Textile Workers, the International Chemical Workers, and several important building trades locals, as well as purely Canadian organizations like the Canadian Seamen's Union and the United Fishermen and Allied Workers.¹⁰⁶

The first open break with the Communists occurred within the CCL early in 1949. After a bitter exchange of charges and counter-charges, the CCL Executive Board voted to expel the Canadian branches of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers and simultaneously launched a drive to reorganize it under non-Communist leadership. In March, the Canadian officers of the United Electrical Workers were suspended from membership in the CCL Executive Council.¹⁰⁷

The CIO Executive Council made its first move in May of the same year, when it passed a resolution demanding the resignation of

¹⁰⁵Jamieson, p. 48

¹⁰⁶Jamieson, p. 48

¹⁰⁷Labour Gazette, 1949, p. 833

of all members who refused to confirm to the CIO policies. Subsequently, the CIO expelled the United Electrical Workers, the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, and other Communist-led affiliates.¹⁰⁸

The Federation's Executive Council, in February 1949, issued a statement declaring that "the evidence presented...discloses a shocking picture of the influence wielded by the Communists in Canada in the affairs of the Trades and Labour Congress" and called on the officers of the TLC to exert "vigorous action to eliminate completely every vestige of Communist influence and control".¹⁰⁹

Staunch efforts from both the CCL and the TLC finally recovered control and the communistic element which existed in the trade unions was abated. In effect, the effort of the communists, for all their idealistic sacrifices, seems to have brought mainly loss to progressive trade unionism in Canada. The quality of unionism, in the opinion of the larger public, has probably suffered; but from an organizational viewpoint, trade unionism in Canada has been strengthened, in that the CCL and the TLC merged in April, 1956.¹¹⁰ This merger was partially due to the cooperation which existed between them during the combat of Communism.

The foregoing account of Communistic infiltration into the labour unions, affords ample evidence as to why the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour (CNTU) was adamant in refusing to merge with

¹⁰⁹P. Norgen, "The Labor Line Between Canada and the United States," in Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Oct. 1950, p. 49, quoted in Jamieson, p. 52

¹¹⁰Jamieson, p. 52

the international unions during this period of communistic permeation.

NATIONALISM

The French unionists had deep nationalistic tendencies and were most unfavorable toward foreign domination. Since the English International unions were affiliated with the American Internationals, affiliation of the French with the English Internationals would automatically mean affiliation with the Americans. The French unions looked upon the American unions as being revolutionary, materialistic, non-spiritual, and non-principled organizations.¹¹¹ The French advanced several reasons for not wanting to be associated with the American Internationals. They accused the Americans of the same fault as they had charged against the Canadian Internationals-- communist radicalism.

In 1919, William Z. Foster, a Communist leader, in consultation with Lenin and Trotsky proposed a plan to: re-shape the American movement by bringing the whole membership of the American Federation of Labour unions together and to affiliate the whole organization to the RILU in Moscow.¹¹²

The AFL conventions of 1920, 1921, and 1922 went on record as condemning Soviet audacity in attempting to create revolutions in other countries, and for the militarization of labour. Nevertheless,

¹¹¹Logan, p. 594

¹¹²Logan, p. 334

to the deeply religious people of Quebec, the idea of possible communistic domination, which to them would mean loss of religious freedom, automatically built a barrier between them and the American International unions. The French looked on this domination as a second English Conquest, the repetition of which they did not wish to experience.

A second factor which worked against affiliation was the strike. Although the French union made every effort to settle disagreements without striking, they nevertheless desired to be independent of the AFL in order to have full control of their power to strike. They were confronted with various problems: Would the American union grant them the right to strike? Would they have to go on sympathy strike with an American union? Would the American union and French union receive proportional strike relief? These problems weakened their desire to affiliate.

Logan reports that strikes in big American cities like Buffalo, Pittsburgh, and New Haven were not too successful and resulted in heavy assessments against the membership without compensating gains. From 1883 to 1893 the total money distributed from strike relief by this method through the Internationals amounted to \$150,964 of which \$13,199 or about nine per cent went to the Canadian locals.¹¹³

As a refutation of the charge that the Canadian labour movement was defrauded through its affiliation with the American movement,

¹¹³Logan, p. 49

and that much money was sent out of Canada while little was received, the AFL reported that in 1919 the total payments made into Canada by the forty-five leading internationals affiliated with the Federation was \$835,713, while the total sum received from Canada was \$617,324, which meant a deficit of expenditure over receipts equal to 75 per cent of the total cost of organization work in Canada.¹¹⁴ This refutation bore little influence with the French union, who persisted in adhering to national unionism.

The attitude of the Church toward foreign domination influenced the decision made by the French unions, as the union was at that time still under the leadership of the clergy. A quotation from a pastoral letter composed by Monsignor Paul Bruchési, Archbishop of Montreal, in 1903, demonstrates the attitude of the Church toward foreign domination.

The leaders and the members of these international unions have nothing in common with our outlook, our temperament, with our habits or our beliefs...and, when at a time of disagreement, is it wise to entrust to the hands of foreigners the type of important considerations which are involved?...Your pastors, your Archbishop, my dear brothers are always available to hear you out or to act as your intermediaries.¹¹⁵

The French unions refused to affiliate with the International unions because they feared the result would be domination by foreign and English-speaking unions.

¹¹⁴Logan, p. 595

¹¹⁵As quoted by R. Rumilly, L'Histoire de la Province de Quebec (Montreal: Valiquette, 1943), Vol. 12, p. 78, in Isbester, p. 69

EDUCATION

Education has always been a problem in Quebec. Referring to the early history again, it was discovered that the Church had a large share of control over education since the English Conquest in 1759. The Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education in the Province of Quebec, published in 1963, stated.

The 1875 Act...provided that all Roman Catholic bishops whose dioceses lay in whole or in part within the Province automatically would become members of the Council, constituting one-third of its membership. The other two-thirds were to be composed of an equal number of Roman Catholic laymen and of Protestants appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. In addition, the Act defined the prerogatives of the two Committees by specifically providing that everything within the "scope of the functions of the council" which "respects specially the schools, and public instruction generally, of Roman Catholics, shall be within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Committee". The same provision was made for the Protestant Committee.¹¹⁶

Apparently the Education Act was unsatisfactory, as the Trades and Labour Congress, at the 1895 Convention, passed a resolution asking that the present system of licensed schools of Quebec be abolished, that the government name a Minister of Education who would name inspectors of schools, and that the trade unions be elected in the various localities to see that the Education Act was properly carried out in the different schools for which they were

¹¹⁶Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education in the Province of Quebec, (Parent Commission), (Pierre DesMarais, Printer, 1963), pp. 15-16

responsible.¹¹⁷

Despite the resolution of the Trades and Labour Congress, the Education Act was still in effect in 1900. At that time a group of "progressives" from the International unions under the leadership of Gustave Francq, a convinced and dedicated socialist, began to agitate for reform in the provincial system of education. They demanded a reformation of the Council of Public Education so as to include a higher percentage of laymen, more lay teachers, free and compulsory education, the free election of local school boards, and the certification of teachers (both lay and clerical) by the province.¹¹⁸

The anticlerical attitude of the English-speaking International unions was most clearly manifested in their attitude toward the role of the Church in education. To the French-speaking unionists, this movement toward compulsory education meant loss of their religion, language, and culture. In an effort to hold fast to that which they wanted, and to avoid the loss of their present and valued Catholic education system, the French-speaking unions refused affiliation with the English-speaking International unions.

¹¹⁷Logan, p. 65

¹¹⁸Isbester, Doctoral Thesis (1966), p. 72

SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Sociological and psychological factors arising from the unique culture of Quebec reflect further light on the causes which worked against affiliation. A guest speaker at the McGill Conference, Mr. Pierre Vadboncoeur (technical adviser to the French and Catholic Union, and close observer of the evolution of this movement) summarized it rather vividly.

...the C.N.T.U., originally the Catholic Syndicates, came into being as a jealously independent body, inspired by a distinct social doctrine and fundamentally devoted to the service of the workers of our own milieu, who were then, in the vast majority, Catholic and French-speaking people. In the first fifteen years or so of its existence this new organization was strongly supported by the cultural environment, namely the Church and the nationalist movement of that time. It was reactionary to a large extent and, I think, of rather little use to many of the workers who belonged to it. For a long period afterwards, it continued to be supported by the traditional elements of our society, even when it had become highly militant and at times defiant of the existing social order. This may seem paradoxical but one must understand the fact that the Catholic Syndicates were and always have been so deeply identified as a part of our community that they could be readily recognized by our milieu even after the sharpest changes of attitudes.¹¹⁹

Mr. Vadboncoeur continued with the statement that, because of its background, the French and Catholic union has always rested on firm ground of autonomy, both practically and ideologically. It had

¹¹⁹P. Vadboncoeur, "Domination or Independence," in McGill University Sixteenth Annual Industrial Relations Conference, 1965, p. 144

to create its own means of action and thinking, even though it could not, obviously, invent basic union practices which were natural to the western world. It was so well rooted in the aspirations of the people, and the communications among the workers and their syndicates were so natural and congenial, that the basis for an almost complete independence from international unions was a fact.

The French and Catholic union has always benefited from a concentration of its forces and of its experience within a territory of reasonable dimensions. This feature has always helped the French-speaking unionists to maintain a sense of belonging. The policies were made directly by the convention of the French delegates, without interference or limitations, and without the hindrances inherent in those huge and heavy bodies that are characteristic of the American labour movement.

It follows, then, that the CNTU is in a very good position to define new objectives, new attitudes, and a new critical approach to the Quebec society as a whole. The ideological stagnation, and even the commitment of the International unions to the aims of the capitalist, are not conditions that could be of any significant weight in a movement like the Catholic one--autonomous as it is and not committed to any credo of social conformism.

The Quebec society is significantly different from the English-speaking society and, having not yet developed its own integrated ideology in terms of economic, social, and political ideas, it remains responsive to much of the research and innovation that may be brought about in the years to come. Mr. Vadboncoeur is of the

opinion that a distinct and autonomous labour movement like the CNTU happens to be the right kind of labour union to have in these circumstances. The CNTU has a future, having not attained maturity as yet--that is to say, being still in the upward trend of progress, development, and creativity.¹²⁰

Vadboncoeur conceded that the CNTU has problems also. For instance, it sometimes experienced a shortage of revenue. But there is in the organization a concentration of energy and an interchangeability of personnel which compensates for other defects, so much so that since 1949, the union has conducted some of the most costly and difficult strikes in the Province of Quebec--in 1957, the Aluminum strike in Arvida involving 6,199 workers for a duration of 215 days; in the same year, the Copper Mine strike at Murdockville involving 215 workmen for 215 days.¹²¹

However, the most important accomplishment was in establishing a free national union, rooted in the French milieu, that would mobilize social energy, interest, and commitment in Quebec as no other labour union could. When a labour union is rooted in the milieu, there are other social forces that come into play. In Quebec, the CNTU has an almost spontaneously attentive relationship with the newspaper Le Devoir, which is an extremely important link. There is a bond between the CNTU and a number of organizations and

¹²⁰Vadboncoeur, pp. 144-6

¹²¹Lipton, statistics, p. 321

people in the province which would be very difficult for an international union to establish. Then, of course, there is the language barrier. When the printers union, which is affiliated with the AFL-CIO, went on strike, an American was sent to negotiate the terms. There were several drawbacks: first, he could not speak French; secondly, he did not live with these members and consequently did not know or understand them; and thirdly, his orders were from American headquarters, which indeed was not appreciated by the members of the Quebec union.¹²²

It would appear from these considerations that the labour movement is a product of the environment in which it operates. The Canadian labour movement is operating throughout the country, so it is under specific pressure from the Canadian society as a whole, whereas the CNTU is operating in a very specific environment. This French union is a product of its environment. Therefore, the program in Quebec has to be tailored to suit their own organizational structure.

The main trend at the present time in the CNTU is to question society as a whole.¹²³ Their opinion is that society is not properly organized, and this issue cannot be solved simply by sharing in the profits made by corporations. Basic values are wrong when human beings are not being treated as they should be, and when they are not occupying the place they should in the economic, social, and political organization.¹²⁴

¹²²Vadboncoeur, p. 146

¹²³Labour Gazette, 1966, p. 712

¹²⁴Vadboncoeur, pp. 156-61

Union members are of the opinion that a plan is needed to co-ordinate the economy as a whole--the plan would involve democratic planning, the aims of which would be widely spread and circulated among people through appropriate methods with the help of all the information media.¹²⁵

The foregoing sociological and psychological factors presented, appear to have a strong influence on the decision of the French and Catholic unions to adhere to their special method of unionism.

ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH TOWARD AFFILIATION

From the above evidence one can say that when negotiations first began, Church officials were somewhat opposed to the plan of affiliation.¹²⁶ At a later period, after World War II, when union conditions had levelled off, and when the clergy's role as leader had declined, the Church did not exercise severe opposition to affiliation. The clergy took the attitude that this problem was now the responsibility of the lay executive.

At the 35th Convention, Canon Henri Pichette, General Chaplain of the CCCL, explained the attitude of the clergy toward affiliation with the Canadian Labour Congress.

It is wrong to think that (Christian) inspiration is exclusively denominational in character, as you know, and it is also wrong to believe that

¹²⁵Labour Gazette, 1966, p. 713

¹²⁶Cf. ftn. 121, p. 71

denominational trade-unionism is the only form which enables you to draw inspiration from your faith in your actions.

If the Catholic hierarchy has shown a preference for Catholic trade-unionism, it has always been careful to add, when possible.¹²⁷

Canon Pichette ended by saying that the Church "had recommended no definite solution".

Despite the attitude of the Church, the lay leaders made no definite decision to affiliate. The minutes of the 35th Convention present arguments put forward by the opponents of affiliation with the CLC.

The CCCL will lose its own characteristics and its integrity; the CLC is made up largely of international unions which receive their instructions from abroad; the CCCL is the only national labour organization in Canada; the CCCL delegates at the CLC convention will feel swamped; jurisdictional disputes will be to the detriment of the CCCL; the central councils of the CCCL will have to give up its affiliation with the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions.¹²⁸

In the past the French union advanced conditions which did not make affiliation desirable for them. Within the past ten years other arguments, as above noted, have been proposed against affiliation. The conflict continues; latest negotiations appear most unfavourable to affiliation of the CNTU with English-speaking International unions.¹²⁹ It would seem that the philosophy of the French-speaking unions should now receive a fuller discussion.

¹²⁷Labour Gazette, 1956, p. 1392 ¹²⁸Labour Gazette, 1958, p.1446

¹²⁹Financial Post, Jan. 6, 1968, p. 24

CHAPTER IV

PHILOSOPHY OF THE FRENCH-SPEAKING TRADE UNION

One could say from the foregoing brief development of the labour movement in Quebec that it is a dynamic institution which passed through various stages of development. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the evolution of the labour movement through the formative, establishment, and power stages with a view to discovering the change in thinking which occurred during this time. Emphasis will be placed on the philosophy of the power stage, that is, the philosophy of the CNTU in recent years.

It was pointed out earlier that, as an institution in society, the trade union organization alters with the changes occurring in a progressive nation--altering and adapting, while at the same time acting on the direction and evolution of the structure of society in which it exists and functions.¹³⁰ While the development of the trade union movement is effected by the social and political structure in which it is allowed to grow, as a social force it too is influential in shaping that environment (directly or indirectly), through its collective activities and policies.

It is evident that the Quebec Labour Union movement was greatly influenced by the society in which it operated, and by the members of that society who were active in the union. The labour union, likewise,

¹³⁰See page 25-6 above

as a social force, has been influential in the past in shaping that environment, and is becoming today a more significant influencing power. A. E. Kovacs has divided a framework for the philosophy of the labour movement into three stages: formative, establishment and power.¹³¹

FORMATIVE STAGE -- 1900-1926

Leadership throughout the history of the labour movement has been an extremely important aspect in influencing the path of union development. During the formative years, when the unions were emerging, and socialistic principles were becoming prevalent, members of the Roman Catholic clergy assumed leadership of the Catholic union. A strong purpose in acquisition of leadership by the Roman Catholic clergy was a reactionary defense against socialism.

Another aspect of this philosophy concerned the strike--the new unions were to have recourse to conciliation and arbitration before calling a strike. This was a mutual agreement between the clerical leaders and the employers. By so doing, the employers were ordinarily assured of peaceful, competent, sober labourers, for only these were generally accepted into the Catholic unions. One suspects that the clergy hoped, through this philosophy, to encourage employers to replace foreign workers (who often went on strike) with French Canadians.

¹³¹A. E. Kovacs, "A Tentative Framework for the Philosophy of the Canadian Labour Movement," in Industrial Relations Quarterly Review, Vol. 20, 1965, pp. 27-46

Both leaders and rank and file tended to be imbued with an idealistic spirit, having a vision of a better life in the future rather than simply looking for immediate gains. A philosophy peculiar to the Quebec unions, which became very evident in their decision to remain a separate entity, was the desire to preserve their French language, Catholic religion, and French culture.

ESTABLISHMENT STAGE -- 1927-1945

Trade unions were legally allowed to function during the establishment stage, and collective bargaining became widespread. The clergy maintained leadership until near the end of the establishment stage, at which time the capabilities of the lay leaders became evident. The clergy withdrew from the direction of the union and assumed the role of spiritual advisors.

The peaceful attitude of the formative stage was beginning to wane; and, on many occasions, union leaders faced resistance and hostility from management. Although efforts were made to settle conflicting interests through negotiations and collective bargaining, the period is characterized by more liberal use of the strike.¹³²

The labour movement is the vehicle of expression of the ideals of the workers; and, as such, it must play an ever-increasing part in all that tends to regulate the living conditions of the worker. The aims and aspirations of the labour movement are the real ideals and

¹³²Lipton, statistics, 42 strikes in 1946, p. 318

conceptions of what life should be.

POWER STAGE -- 1946-1967

In the power stage, when the organization took on features of a large scale enterprise with far-reaching influences on society, leadership was entirely in the hands of competent, efficient, and knowledgeable union members who held a major responsibility for all decisions. The clergy continued in the role of spiritual advisors.

The organization grew;¹³³ greater centralization and larger staffs of specialists were required to interpret and to solve the various problems which arose in the collective bargaining process. The philosophy of the new leaders was taking on revolutionary and energetic changes in places like Black Lake, Drummondville, and Granby.¹³⁴ Three of the most energetic and progressive members to hold presidency were: Gerard Picard, Jean Marchand, and Marcel Pepin.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE NEW LEADERS

The new philosophy became strongly evident at the 1958 Convention. The first indication was a resolution to have the word "Catholic" removed from the Confederation title.¹³⁵ It was noted earlier that

¹³³Membership increased from 70,000 in 1944 to 113,885 in 1962--Labour Gazette, 1962, p. 1375

¹³⁴Lipton, p. 319

¹³⁵Cf. ftn. 28, p. 13

the resolution was enacted and the name was changed from the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour to the Canadian National Trade Union.¹³⁶

A second sign of the new philosophy was evident at the 1961 Convention.¹³⁷ A debate on unemployment gave rise to a spate of ideas and opinions on state intervention, nationalization, and socialism.¹³⁸ Previously, this preaching had been the doubtful prerogative of the radicals and intellectuals within the CNTU.¹³⁹

Isbester notes three possible reasons for this leftward shift in the orientation of the Confederation.¹⁴⁰ First, it was consciously encouraged by all three leaders: Picard, Mathieu, and Marchand. The union's bi-monthly publication, Le Travail, edited by Gerard Pelletier, at that time an outspoken socialist, had been planning a long-term campaign to educate its readers about socialism.

Secondly, Pope John's encyclical letter, entitled Mater et Magistra (Mother and Teacher), seemed, in the words of Marchand, to be "...confirmation of certain points of view we have been upholding".¹⁴¹ The encyclical dealt at some length with the idea of socialization--defined as the "progressive multiplication of relations in common life".¹⁴²

¹³⁶See pages 12, 13 above ¹³⁷Labour Gazette, 1960, p. 1265

¹³⁸Labour Gazette, 1961, p. 232 ¹³⁹Isbester, p. 55

¹⁴⁰Isbester, p. 55-56

¹⁴¹Labour Gazette, Vol. 62, No. 1, 1962, p. 32

¹⁴²Pope John XXIII, Encyclical letter Mater et Magistra, translated by W. J. Gibbons, S.J. (Paulist Press, New York, 1962)

It expressed the Church's concern for the progressive alienation of the working man from the ownership of the productive enterprises and, in effect, gave the Church's approval to certain measures such as social security, government intervention in private enterprise, socialization of certain vital facilities, and worker participation in ownership and management.¹⁴³

The third reason for the increased interest in socialism was the promising beginning made by the New Democratic Party (NDP). The NDP was a national political party formed out of the former Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) which had a strong labour element. With these factors in mind, the French and Catholic Union took on a positive spirit of development.

PHILOSOPHY OF PRESIDENT GERARD PICARD

Much of the impetus of the new philosophy was radiated by the leaders, usually the acting president. At the 1951 Convention, Gerard Picard revealed his philosophy for the reform of economic life. The December, 1952 issue of The Industrial Research Association, reported that Mr. Picard spoke out strongly against the capitalist system--remarks which could label him a socialist or worse. Picard could conceive of the possibility, and emphasized the desirability, of finding a medium road between capitalism and collectivism. Many

¹⁴³Mater et Magistra, p. 18

people are usually inclined to think that the only alternative to capitalism is some form of socialism. As some people are opposed to socialism, they feel constrained to say that they are in favor of capitalism. "Too many people," says Picard, "imagine that to wish to abandon capitalism is necessarily to wish to enter upon the road to socialism or communism. This conclusion is far too simple and extremely unjust."¹⁴⁴

When Picard called for the reform of industry and recommended basic structural changes in the capitalist system, he was thinking, among other things, of some form of co-determination or co-management, arrived at by voluntary agreement between employers and workers. He did not say that economic co-determination or co-management was a natural right; but, he did insist, that it is a highly desirable goal towards which we may legitimately strive by the use of every available voluntary method of labour-management cooperation.¹⁴⁵

This idea of stronger power has become the philosophical thinking of most union organizations. But, in Quebec, this ideology will be a difficult one to attain, due to the high percentage of English-speaking managers and entrepreneurs, as compared to the high percentage of French-speaking workers in the lower strata of employment.

¹⁴⁴Rev. G. G. Higgins, "Union Attitudes Toward Economic Roles," in Industrial Relations Research Association, December, 1952, p. 168

¹⁴⁵Rev. G. G. Higgins, pp. 168-69

The French contend that this control of business by the English-speaking is just another effort to keep them in subjection. And yet, in this respect, few economic regions in Canada have real autonomy.¹⁴⁶ Quebecers have about as much control over business in Quebec as Ontario people have over business in their province.

Recent events in Quebec might lead one to believe that Picard's philosophy could possibly be realized. A study conducted by the department of sociology at McGill University has discovered that "English Canadians have become increasingly hostile to, and afraid of the French, for they feel that the movement of the French-Canadians into the townships is a well-organized scheme to push them out completely."¹⁴⁷

Some businessmen believe that new blood is urgently needed in Montreal's financial community if the threat of Toronto domination is to be counteracted.¹⁴⁸ French-Canadian society, in a state of exciting change at the moment, is regarded as a promising source of aggressive talent. This along with the fear being experienced by the English-speaking, may help to promote the realization of Mr. Picard's ideas and plans.

Far from being a threat to the English-speaking Quebecer, the French-Canadians' desire for greater influence in business promises

¹⁴⁶E. A. Safarian, Foreign Ownership of Canadian Industry (McGraw Hill, Toronto, 1966)

¹⁴⁷P. Desbarats, A Minority Report in the Montreal Star, January 1963, pp. 33-34

¹⁴⁸Desbarats, p. 35

a new era of cooperation and real understanding between the two groups. The Montreal Star reported.

In the next decade, the breakthrough of existing barriers between French and English may come in Quebec business offices and factories. Here, effective mixing of the two groups is promoted by common goals. The profit motive is the catalyst.

Changes in public opinion will make it increasingly difficult for business to operate in Quebec without the active and equal partnership of French-Canadians. If this is achieved, many social divisions in the city and province will start to melt of their own accord....

French-Canadians now have embraced industrialization as a means of survival. The accent no longer is on retreat from the "threat" of industrialization. French-Canadians now believe that they must play a major role in this inevitable and desirable process if they are to survive.¹⁴⁸

Another step in the development of Picard's plan is a movement in Quebec today to unionize all employees--professionals as well as labourers. If the CNTU is successful in this attempt, the strengthening power will undoubtedly have far-reaching effects on Quebec.

Kovacs suggests that, as the unions grow in power, the narrow job-centered policies, which gave the organizations its strength, will be broadened. The trend towards an extension of "socialized wages"--that is, not simply higher wages, but more complex and extensive fringe benefits orientated towards long-run security--is an indication of the union's insistence on participation in policy which effects the immediate job-interests of organized labour. It is also

¹⁴⁸Desbarats, p. 35-6

an indication of the Union's push to integrate more solidly into society through the long-run interests of the workers. While no apparent or distinct ideology from the prevailing values of society emerges, it is not insignificant to interpret such policy as reflecting a power motivation to greater control in the distribution of the benefits of progress.

Thus, the philosophy of the labour movement in the third stage of union development is characterized by a deeply engrained pragmatism carried over from the establishment stage, and nurtured by power and complexity. Whether the reforming consciousness will appear as a vitalizing force in the future course of the CNTU movement is difficult to surmise; whether idealism will become infused in the social consciousness of the labour force remains equally unpredictable.¹⁴⁹

PHILOSOPHY OF PRESIDENT MARCEL PEPIN

The 42nd General Convention of the CNTU, entitled "A Society For Man", was held at Montreal in October, 1966. The philosophy of President Marcel Pepin is revealed in the minutes of the meeting. He pointed out that the intermediary bodies that represent the working classes must acquire powers of intervention, participation, and decision, greater than the simple means of defense presently in use at the plant level. Pepin stated that a plan was needed to coordinate the economy as a whole, and this "not when we are dead...

¹⁴⁹Kovacs, p. 44-6

because it can no longer be allowed that one generation passes its hardships on to the next".¹⁵⁰ President Pepin continued, "It is necessary to work out progressively our own conceptions of the organization of society...(invent) new social forms, more noble, more complete. The future must necessarily be different from the past, or else it will sow the seeds of violence and hatred".¹⁵¹

It appears that the main theme of the philosophy of the CNTU today is social reform--not just substantial salary increases, but complete integration of the worker, and the sharing of responsibility at all levels of undertakings.

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE CNTU AT PRESENT

Literature on the topic states that active participation by the clergy in the labour movement in Quebec ceased around 1949. The Asbestos strike, which is said to have marked the turning point of the Quebec union from a peaceful to a militant strategy, was the historic event which revealed the maturity of the union. It was learned earlier that it was at the end of the Asbestos strike that the clergy ceded their role as leaders to the laity and assumed the role of spiritual advisors. However, the withdrawal of the clergy from the role of leadership was a gradual process. This was not an abrupt discontinuation of all labour relations.

¹⁵⁰ Labour Gazette, 1966, p. 713

¹⁵¹ Labour Gazette, 1966, p. 713

An excerpt from a personal letter received from the General Chaplain, Canon Henri Pichette, gives eye-witness information of the situation.

I have been general chaplain of the CNTU since 1948. Up until the time of my nomination and for some years after, the priests attached to the Catholic unions took a very active part in the establishment and in the life of these unions. They had in the unions a very heavy role as directors since at that time there were very few if any permanent union officials. The year 1949 is not too well chosen to mark a radical change in the role of the clergy in the unions. In fact, it is only with the gradual arrival of permanent union officers within the movement that the clergy assigned themselves a role which became more and more a strictly pastoral one, contributing above all to education.¹⁵²

It appears that the change in the role of the clergy was a very gradual process. The question then arises--what is the exact role of the clergy in recent times? A study made in 1964 by the chaplains of the syndicates to be presented to the Bishops describes the role of the labour chaplain as follows:

Double Role

The union chaplain is basically an educator and former of (the union's) conscience. As a priest he must try to become the "symbol of Christ's charity" among the active union members. He discharges his functions of educator by spreading abroad the social doctrine of the Church, and by helping union officials to apply it to the life of the union. He carries out his mission by participating in the preparation and execution of training programs, and by giving lectures and informal talks during the various union functions (conventions).

¹⁵²Personal letter received from Canon Henri Pichette, General Chaplain of the CNTU, Quebec, Feb. 5, 1968 (Translation from French used in this Chp.--Professor D. V. Parker, Dept. of Education, University of Alberta)

The union chaplain carries out his role in a second way: he advises union officials as to union activities, and shares in the planning of decisions. He is part of the union's managing team and tries to point out to them the demands which truth, justice, charity, and freedom make on (the union's) activities. In brief, he carries out among the union officials a "ministerial role".¹⁵³

The distinct role, as described above, was applicable to the work of the clergy until the recent changes occurred during the rejuvenation of the Catholic Church. Canon Pichette points out that the clergy are encountering some little difficulty with their role in the unions, just as other priests are having difficulty defining their role in the contemporary world.

The attitude of most of the officers of the CNTU remains very sympathetic to the presence of the chaplains within their movement. Just as is the case with most Christians, along with us they are looking for situations in which the priests may play a part in the contemporary world. To be sure there are certain permanent officers, especially those coming from the universities, who claim that our presence within the union movement has become an anachronism, but this is not the opinion of the great majority of the truly active unionists and members generally.¹⁵⁴

The conclusion, then, is that the clergy are still involved in the labour movement as spiritual directors, as educators, and as advisors; but no longer act in the capacity of leaders.

Since the clergy still participate rather actively in the labour movement, one might wonder about their attitude toward the present

¹⁵³ Carrefour Sur L'Apostolat Sacerdotal Aupres des Travailleurs, Notes préparées par les aumôniers de syndicats, December, 1964

¹⁵⁴ Letter from Canon Pichette

progressive philosophy of the CNTU. At the last convention, General Chaplain Pichette made it very clear. "Industrial society will continue to be unfair if it does not offer the worker the possibility of complete integration and of sharing responsibility at all levels of the undertaking."¹⁵⁵

The word "socialism" is used to express a variety of meanings. The word "socialization", as used by the Catholic Church in Mater et Magistra, simply reflects the fact that modern life is becoming more social, and that men are becoming increasingly interdependent. The trend toward growing governmental controls over business is but one phase of this development.

In Mater et Magistra, Pope John challenged leaders of government to decentralize power whenever feasible. This is best done by strengthening intermediate groups in society. This means revitalizing state and local governments. It calls for giving more and more power to socially responsible corporations and labour unions.

Reverend J. Cronin, when writing on the social teachings of the Church, says that this plea for more power is not the "sloganeering states rights" of some extremists. Yet, government must promote the common good, the general welfare, and it may not remain impotent or inactive when basic human rights are being violated.

A phrase that recurs throughout the encyclical is, "Economic

¹⁵⁵Labour Gazette, December, 1966, p. 714

progress must be accompanied by a corresponding social progress".¹⁵⁶ Pope John rejects the "trickle-down" theory of economic distribution which holds that as the economy prospers and accumulates great wealth, much of this will seep down to the poor. This did happen to a degree in some industrial nations but, in others, wealth accumulated to the few, and destitution remained with the many.¹⁵⁷

Economic progress must be matched by increase in social services: education, medical care, good housing, and social insurance. Wealth should be distributed equitably and social inequalities should be kept to a minimum. The essential point is a fair distribution of national income--eliminating gross disparities between the rich and the poor.¹⁵⁸

This explanation of socialism differs quite drastically from Marxian theory as previously stated.

Socialists stand for the overthrow of the competitive system. They seek abolition of private ownership of the means of production, including land, capital and machinery. They seek the organization of an industrial commonwealth in which the government will control the production and the people control the government.¹⁵⁹

With the clergy in Quebec acting as moral advisors to the labour unions, it would seem just to conclude that the principles advocated by the progressive leaders follow the Christian ideology of socialism

¹⁵⁶Rev. J. F. Cronin, S.S., Ph.D., The Social Teaching of Pope John XXIII (The Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, 1963), p. 12

¹⁵⁷Cronin, p. 12

¹⁵⁸Cronin, p. 12

¹⁵⁹Labour Advocate, Sept., 1891, quoted in Lipton, p. 88

as expressed in the papal encyclical, Mater et Magistra. What the CNTU is endeavouring to accomplish is the material, social, religious, psychological, and cultural welfare of union members.

At the last General Convention, the guest speaker, Cardinal Paul Leger, concluded with a remark that characterized the philosophy of the Church with regard to the unions.

In pursuit of social justice, Christian trade-unionists must show unequalled energy. But, on the other hand, they must likewise have an unequalled desire to refrain from violence and to place at the service of justice all the resources of their imagination and of the noteworthy solidarity which characterizes them.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰Labour Gazette, 1966, p. 714

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter will summarize: a) the key initiatives and attitudes adopted by the Church in the formation of the labour union movement; b) the characteristics of the union which emerged; c) the causes of the conflict which existed among the English-speaking and French-speaking unions; d) the influence of the culture on the organizations; and e) the role of the clergy in the labour movement at present.

Before considering these specific conclusions, it will be meaningful to glance briefly at the history of early Quebec. Quebec was founded with a twofold purpose: 1) the development of the fur-trading industry, and 2) the propagation of the Roman Catholic faith. It is to this latter purpose that the dominance of the Catholic Church in Quebec is attributed. Today (1967) the English population of Quebec (12%) dominates the industrial economy. Gradually, the French populace moved into the urban areas and sought employment in industry. Their training for technological positions was practically nil.

The French-speaking and unprofessional population of Quebec was made up of the unskilled labour force and remained at the low income stratum of employment. The power of capitalism took advantage of this cheap labour and as a result the conditions of society at the turn of the 20th. century were deplorable.

The Church first became involved in the movement in 1900. The first interest was shown when Bishop Bégin was asked to act as arbitrator during a lockout in the boot and shoe industry. He recommended that the unions change their policies to agree with Christian principles. His recommendations were accepted and it was simultaneously agreed to have a chaplain named to work with each union. "Pure Catholic syndicalism" is said to have begun in Chicoutimi, Quebec, in 1912. Since that time, unions continued to spring up in various parts of the Province.

These endeavours of the clergy were developed and further promoted by the publication in 1891 of a papal directive, Rerum Novarum, composed by Pope Leo XIII. This papal encyclical expressed the Church's concern for the poor social conditions which existed as a result of capitalism. The directive recommended that the workers form organizations for the purpose of creating a united effort in the pursuit of their own welfare.

Another circumstance which initiated Church involvement was the resolution passed by the Trades and Labour Congress in 1902 which stated that no national union would be recognized where an international union already existed. Many members who had been expelled by the Trade and Labour Congress joined the Catholic unions.

The key attitudes of the Church in the formation of the unions concerned: a) the welfare of the social conditions of the workmen; b) the education of the workmen; and c) the ceding of the direction of the unions to a lay leadership as soon as they became capable.

The primary intention of the Church was to form effective unions which would improve the working conditions and the social conditions of the French-speaking people. A secondary intention was the education of the workmen in the industrial philosophy of the Church. This was accomplished by a secondary structure of the organization, the study clubs. The underlying motive was to prepare the workmen to take on the responsibilities of the union direction as soon as possible.

The unions moved through three phases of development--the formative, the establishment, and the power states--which saw the emergence of a dynamic, progressive, and self-supporting union.

The union progressed under the leadership of the laity and in 1960 a significant change in policy was made. Originally, membership was exclusive to members of the Catholic faith, but in 1948 this practice began to wane. In 1960, the General Convention passed a resolution to have membership open to individuals of any faith. Simultaneously, the name, Canadian Catholic Confederation of Labour, was changed to the Canadian National Trade Union (CNTU).

The Quebec union as it is today characterizes a dynamic, militant, and self-supporting organization, operating on the national level. With the exception of a few, all affiliated unions of the CNTU are located in the Province of Quebec. Membership constitutes about 10% of total Canadian unionists.

The Canadian Labour Congress has asked the French-speaking union on several occasions to affiliate with the International unions, but to no avail. The struggle toward affiliation of the English-speaking

unions continued from the turn of the 20th century until 1940. At that time there were three central organizations: the Trades and Labour Congress, the Canadian Congress of Labour, and the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour. Several attempts to affiliate the TLC and the CCL occurred between 1947 and 1955. Finally, in March of 1955 the two unions merged to form one union known as the Canadian Labour Congress. It is evident that this long struggle toward affiliation on the part of the international unions weakened the desire of the French union to become associated with the English-speaking unions.

The French people feared they would lose their religion, language, and culture under a communistic regime. The clergy believed that by strengthening the French union, and by avoiding affiliation with the unions where communistic principles existed, that their religion, language, and culture could be preserved. The first open break with communism occurred in 1949. Staunch efforts from both the CCL and the TLC finally recovered control, and the communistic element which existed in the international unions was abated.

Another factor which worked against affiliation was the nationalistic tendency of the French union with regard to foreign domination. The Canadian International Union was affiliated with the American International Union. If the French union affiliated with the Canadian International, it would automatically become affiliated with the American union. The French union wanted to avoid American affiliation on several accounts. They charged the American union with the same

accusation charged against the Canadian International--communist radicalism. A second contention concerned the power of the strike. Although the French union endeavoured to settle disagreements peacefully, nevertheless, they feared American domination would mean the loss of their right to strike. Another point of controversy involved membership fees. They doubted if dues sent to American headquarters would be disbursed proportionately at the time of a strike.

Sociological and psychological factors arising from the unique culture of Quebec reflect light on further causes which worked against affiliation. The French union was fundamentally devoted to the service of workers of the French milieu and was originally supported by the cultural environment. Because of this background, the French and Catholic Union had always rested on the firm ground of autonomy. It was so well rooted in the aspiration of the people, and the communications among the workers and their syndicates were so congenial, that the basis for an almost complete measure of independence was obvious.

The Quebec Unions pointed out that the French-speaking society was significantly different from the English-speaking society and having not yet developed its own integrated ideology in terms of economic, social, and political ideas, it remains responsive to much of the research and innovation that may be brought about in the years to come.

According to the thought of French union leaders, under those circumstances, a distinct and autonomous labour unit like the CNTU

was the proper type to have. They believed the CNTU had a future, that is, that it still was in the upward trend of progress, development, and creativity.

They considered the most important accomplishment to have been the establishment of a free national union, rooted in the French milieu, that could mobilize social energy, interest, and commitment in Quebec as no other labour union could. Because of this strong bond within the milieu, the union believed that they had established a good relationship with a number of organizations and people within the Province, particularly the newspaper, Le Devoir. This type of relationship would be difficult for an international union to establish.

The most important factor, both sociologically and psychologically, was the language barrier. The French unionists were of the opinion that if they affiliated with the International Unions, communications and understanding would be very limited. These contributing sociological and psychological elements appeared to have had a strong influence on the Quebec union's decision to refuse affiliation and to adhere to the national method of unionism.

More recent among the arguments put forward by the opponents of affiliation with the CLC seem to border on the nationalistic philosophy--the CNTU will lose its own characteristics and its integrity; the CNTU is the only national labour organization in Canada; the CNTU delegates at the CLC convention will be vastly outnumbered; jurisdictional disputes will be to the detriment of the CNTU; the

central council of the CNTU will disappear; and the CNTU will have to give up its affiliation with the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions. At present the CNTU believes it is a self-sufficient organization which has great propensity to grow. Affiliation negotiations are at the lowest point ever reached. The fundamental cause of the conflict consisted of a difference in the basic principles of trade unionism as exercised by the two organizations.

It would appear that in the beginning, Church officials were opposed to affiliation. Recently, however, the General Chaplain of the CNTU, Canon Henri Pichette, stated that the Church was not recommending any solution to the problem, that it was the responsibility of the lay leaders.

Observation of the relationship of the CNTU with the Church in Quebec provokes thought as to the influence of the culture on the two organizations. The previous analysis would substantiate the idea that the unique culture of Quebec had a definite influence on the two organizations--the Roman Catholic Church and the labour union.

The account of the early history of the Province revealed the circumstances which prompted the involvement of the clergy in the unions. Since a similar participation was not exercised by the clergy in other parts of Canada, it would appear that this relationship was an outgrowth of the culture. Because the French culture of Quebec was a carry-over of the European culture, it would seem to be a logical conclusion that the labour union which developed within

this milieu would follow the European model of unionism.

The initial influence of the culture on the Church was the decision of the clergy to form the union; the initial influence of the culture on the labour union was the model of unionism which evolved--the European model. A further effect of the culture was the refusal of the Quebec union to affiliate with the International unions. The nature of the majority of the various causes presented in the foregoing--communist radicalism, nationalism, education, sociological and psychological factors, loss of the central council of the CNTU, and loss of affiliation with the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions, would lead one to conclude that these causes were largely inherent in the culture.

It would appear that the labour movement is a product of the environment in which it operates, and consequently the program of the French union has to be tailored to suit their own organizational culture. This is very evident in the labour union organization in Quebec today. The CNTU may be influential in shaping the social structure of Quebec. Their goal is toward an extension of a "socialized wage"--that is, not simply higher wages, but more complex and extensive fringe benefits orientated toward long-run securities. The Union is apparently endeavouring to integrate more solidly into society through the long-run interests of the workers. These interests are being interpreted as reflecting power motivation to greater control in the distribution of the benefits of progress.

It seems that the main theme of the philosophy of the CNTU today

is social reform--not just substantial salary increases, but complete integration of the worker, and the sharing of responsibility at all levels of undertaking.

During the formative and establishment stages the clergy worked in the capacity of leaders. As the union was developing from the establishment stage to the power stage, incidents occurred which proved that the union had reached the point of development where a lay leadership was available to take the responsibility. The militancy of the lay leaders shown during the Asbestos strike in 1949 was the historic event which brought forth the realization that the union had reached maturity.

In 1949 the decision to withdraw as leaders was made by the clergy. This change of leaders was a gradual process which developed over a number of years. As lay leaders became qualified to take the executive positions, the clergy ceded their prior role of leader and assumed the role of spiritual advisors. However, the chaplains to the various local unions continue to be active in the labour movement today. They have a double role to enact. Firstly, the union chaplain is basically an educator. He discharges this function by spreading abroad the social doctrine of the Church through participation in training programs, and by giving lectures at conventions. Secondly, he advises union officials as to union activities and shares in the planning of decisions. He is part of the union's managing team and tries to point out to them the demands which truth, justice, charity, and freedom make on the union's activities.

Canon Pichette, General Chaplain of the CNTU, points out that the clergy are encountering some little difficulty with their role in the unions. In spite of this, the clergy and union leaders, as well as members of the rank and file, carry on a very friendly relationship.

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APPENDIX



CONFÉDÉRATION DES SYNDICATS NATIONAUX
CONFEDERATION OF NATIONAL TRADE UNIONS

Québec, 5 février 1968.

Révérènde Soeur Catherine Lawrence,
Couvent St-Vincent,
Edmonton, Alberta.

Révérènde Soeur,

Il me fait plaisir de répondre à votre lettre du 22 janvier dernier, dans laquelle vous désirez savoir quelle a été la participation du clergé dans les unions ouvrières du Québec depuis 1949.

Je suis aumônier général de la CNTU depuis 1948. Jusqu'à ma nomination et quelques années ultérieures, les prêtres affectés aux syndicats catholiques avaient une part très active dans la fondation et la vie de ces syndicats. Ils y jouaient un rôle supplétif considérable puisqu'il n'existait à peu près pas de permanents syndicaux libérés. L'année 1949 est mal choisie pour marquer un changement radical du rôle du clergé dans les unions. En fait, ce n'est qu'avec l'arrivée graduelle des permanents libérés à l'intérieur du mouvement que le clergé s'est réservé de plus en plus un rôle strictement pastoral, contribuant surtout à l'éducation. Je vous inclus un document encore d'actualité qui décrit bien le rôle actuel des prêtres à l'intérieur du mouvement. Il est évident que comme l'ensemble du clergé, nous rencontrons des difficultés d'adaptation dans l'élaboration de la pastorale dans ce milieu comme dans les autres.

L'attitude de l'ensemble des dirigeants de la CNTU reste très sympathique à la présence des aumôniers à l'intérieur de leur mouvement. Comme l'ensemble des chrétiens, ils cherchent avec nous quelles sont les nouvelles formes d'insertion de l'action des prêtres dans le monde contemporain. Il y a bien quelques permanents libérés, venant surtout des universités, qui prétendent que notre présence à l'intérieur du mouvement syndical est devenue anachronique, mais ce n'est pas l'opinion de la grande majorité des militants et des membres.

Depuis 1960, des transformations constitutionnelles ont été opérées dans la Confédération des Travailleurs catholiques du Canada (CTCCQ). Plusieurs motifs ont pu être invoqués, mais le principal à ce que le mot catholique dans le nom soit enlevé du nom désignant la centrale et qu'on ne se réfère plus explicitement à la doctrine sociale de l'Eglise, mais plutôt à une déclaration de principes, tient à des exigences du régime syndical en Amérique du Nord. Comme effectivement et officiellement la CTCC était ouverte aux non-catholiques depuis 1948, il fallait éviter de pratiquer à l'endroit de ces derniers toute forme de discrimination.

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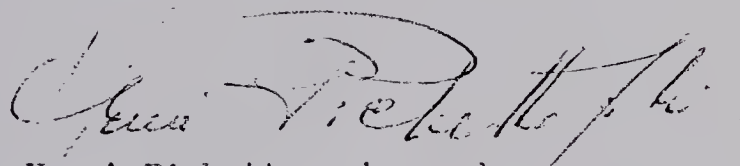
CONFÉDÉRATION DES SYNDICATS NATIONAUX
CONFEDERATION OF NATIONAL TRADE UNIONS

2 -

Vous pourrez constater dans le volumineux mémoire que les aumôniers ont fait parvenir à l'Épiscopat à l'époque qu'ils étaient entièrement d'accord avec ces transformations. Ces dernières n'ont affecté en rien la présence et le rôle des aumôniers à l'intérieur du mouvement. La CNTU a fait siennes, comme vous le constaterez dans la déclaration de principes que je vous fais parvenir, les principales propositions de la doctrine sociale de l'Eglise qui la concernaient.

J'aurais aimé pouvoir causer avec vous pour nuancer et expliquer les informations que je vous donne, mais j'espère que vous avez déjà en mains un minimum qui peut vous être utile.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Révérende Soeur, l'expression de mes meilleurs sentiments.


Henri Pichette, ptre, chan.,
Aumônier général de la CSN.

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